RELIGIO STOICI.

Acts 1. 11.

—*Ye men of Gallile, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?*

Sir G. Mackenzie

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RELIGIO SECRETI.

Acts 1. 11.

Ye men of Gallile, why stand ye gaining up into heaven?

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THE STOICK To his CENSURERS.

I Am, by Religion, a *Protestant*, and such confide little in merit; and by Humour, a *Stoick*, and such are most inconcerned in censures: Wherefore, as I intend to rival none of these who court *fame*, I hope none of these will asperse me; and if I obtain truce from them, I know none else will attaque me.

The multitude (which albeit it be said to have many heads, yet, was ever known to have few brains) will doubtless condemn me for en-

veighing againſt vanity, whilſt I my ſelf am ſo vain as to write Books and will pronounce me as ridiculous in this, as theſe Philoſophers were of old, who denyed motion whilſt their tongues mov'd in their cheek; to whom my return ſhall be, that finding many (even of ſuch as I know will cenſure me) be-myred in the puddle of error, I have, in this Eſſay, proffer'd them my aſſiſtance, with an intention, not to ſhew my ſtrength, but my compaſſion. I am no ſuch fool, as to ſhew theſe *Philiſtines* the *Sampſons*-lock wherein my ſtrength lyes, which doubtleſs their cruelty would never ſpare.

Others, who, by their gravity, (or ſerious dulneſs) have ſublimated themſelves above the rabble, will poſſibly accuſe my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations ſo excentrick to my employment. But, theſe may know, that thir

Papers

pers are but the parings of my ther Studies, and becauſe they were ſuch, I have flung them out into the ſtreets. Neither can I underſtand, how it proves a Lawyer to be remiſſe in his imployment, that he takes leiſure to reach a little helebor which lyes by him, to ſuch poor perſons, as becauſe of their phanatick melancholy ſtand much in need thereof. This diſcourſe is intended to be a medicine, and ſuch never reliſh well nor receive commendation from their pleaſanteſſe, but from their profit, and are not to be cenſured by their taſte, but by their operation.

There are many things in this ſmall Peece, which may ſeem heterodoxe to ſuch as defie *cuſtom*, and worſhip the *Dagon* of authorized tradition: Yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it differ from the publick Clock of the City; eſpecially where the ſun of Righteouſneſs hath not, by pointing clearly

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ly the dyal of Faith, declared which of the two is in the right. I acknowledge the Church to be my Mother; neither will I offer to ſcratch out my Mothers eyes when they perceive my errors: yet, I believe that a childe may differ from his mothers judgement, in things wherein her honour is not concerned: But, I will wed no opinion without her conſent who is my Parent; or, if I have wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and it's Officials, to grant me a divorce. I ſubmit my ſelf and this Tractat to her and their cenſures, and deſires none to believe me or it, but in theſe things only wherein I believe her and them. As for others, ſince I have taken the liberty to write, I were unmannerly if I refuſed them the liberty to cenſure, and really it pleaſes my humour, to ſee curres bark and ſnarle at what I hold out to them. THE

G. Mk.

THE STOICKS Friendly ADDRESSE To the PHANATICKS Of all Sects and Sorts.

THe mad-cap Zealots of this bigot Age, intending to mount heaven, Elias-like, in Zeals fiery Chariot, do, like fooliſh Phaeton, not only fall themſelves from their flaming ſeat, but by their furious over-driving, invelop the World in unquenchable combuſtions; when they have thus ſet the whole

Globe on a blaze, this they tearm a new light. *It is remarkable in Scripture, that* Jehu, *who drove furiously, and called up* ~~the Prophet~~ Jehonadab *to see what zeal he had for the house of God, was even at that instant, doing it more wrong then ever was done to it by unconcerned* Gallio, *who flantingly cared for none of those things. And that none of all the apostolick Conclave desired ever fire might rain from above upon mis-believers; except the Sons of* Zebedee, *who immediatly thereafter, arrived at that pitch of vanity, as to desire to sit in heaven upon Christs right and left hand. And that* Peter, *who was the first who did draw a sword in his Masters quarrel, was likewayes the first who denyed him. Firy Zeal blows soon up, such combustible mater as the Sons of* Zebedee; *and that flash being spent and evaporat, a fall follows, as befell* Peter. *As that body*

dy is hardly cureable, which entertains ſuch ill-ſuited neighbours as a cold Stomach and a hote Liver; So, the body of the viſible Church may be now concluded to be in a very diſtempered conditon, when it's Charity waxeth cold, and it's Zeal hot, beyond what is due to either; and theſe feaveriſh fits of unnatural Zeal, wherewith the Church is troubled in it's old and cold age, betokens too much that it draws near it's laſt period.

The inconſiderableneſs likewayes of our differences, and inconſideratneſs wherewith they are perſued, induces me to believe, that the Zeal now a-la-mode, *is not that holy Fire which is kindled by a coal from the Altar, but is that* ignis fatuus, *or wild-fire, which is but a Meteor peec'd up of malignant Vapours, and is obſerved to frequent Church-yards ofter then other places.*

I am none of thoſe who acknowledge no temples, *beſides theſe of their own heads. And I am of opinion, that ſuch as think that they have a Church within their own breaſts, ſhould likewayes believe, that their heads are ſteeples, and ſo ſhould provide them with bells. I believe that there is a Church-militant, which, like the Ark, muſt lodge in it's bowels all ſuch as are to be ſaved from the flood of condemnation: but, to chalk out it's bordering lines, is beyond the geography of my Religion. He was infallible who compared* Gods Spirit to the wind which bloweth where it liſteth, we hear the ſound of it, but knows not whence it comes, or whether it goeth. *And the name graven upon the whit-ſtone, none knows but he who hath it.* Eli *concluded* Hannah *to be drunk, when ſhe was pouring out her ſoul before her Maker: and* Elias *believed, that the*

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Church, in his dayes, was ſtinted to his own perſon; and yet God told him, that there were ſeven thouſand in Iſrael *who had not bowed their knees to* Baal: *why then ſhould any private Chriſtian determine, magiſterially, that, wherein the greateſt of Prophets erred?*

The reed wherewith the Temple was to be meaſured, Rev. 11. 2. *was only entruſted to an Angel; and yet he had not in commiſſion,* to meaſure the Court that was without, becauſe it was given to the Gentiles. *And albeit,* Rev. 7. *the number of the Jews who were ſaved is determined; yet, the number of Gentiles is left indefinit, and ſaid to be numberleſs.*

There is nothing more ordinar, then for each Nation to confine the Church within themſelves. And in that Nation again, one corner will have themſelves the Sanctum Sanctorum

rum *of that only Temple; albeit our Saviour in His Goſpel aſſures us, that men ſhall come from all corners of the world, and ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob. *And* John *in his* Revelation *tells us, that multitudes of all Nations, Kindreds and Families, were ſeen following the Lamb. Upon this ſame block do theſe likewayes ſtumble, who put the bolt of their uncharitableneſs upon the gates of heaven, to debar whole Profeßions, ſuch as Lawyers and Phyſitians, from entring in thereat; notwithſtanding that the abovecited place tells us, that there were only twelve thouſand of the tribe of* Levi *the Prieſt choſen, and the like number was prickt; in the tribe of* Judah, *the Law-giver:* Aaron *the Prieſt did mould the golden calf, and not* Moſes *the Judge; and* Korah *and* Dathan *were Levits, and yet mutined againſt their Magiſtrates.*

I ſay not this to diſparage that holy Function: For, none ſhall wiſh Aarons *rod to flouriſh more then my ſelf; and ordinarily, theſe who love not to touch the Lords anointed, will likewayes be ſure, to do His Prophets no harm: but, I ſay it to take off an aſperſion which hath ſtain'd too long, and too injuſtly, theſe of my own profeſſion. Is not the Church our common Mother? albeit, I confeſs, ſhe is likewayes their Nurſe, in a more particular way; and ſince there is heavenly* Mannah *enough to aliment us all, why ſhould Chriſtans deny to admit their brethren to an equal partage?*

It grieves me ſore to ſee my mother the Church tortur'd like Rebecca, *by carrying ſtrugling twaines in her pained bowels. And ſeing all Chriſtians are but pilgrims here, I admire that theſe pilgrims ſhould leave off to journey, and ſtand skirmiſhing*

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and fighting with all such as will not travel their road. And albeit we acknowledge, that the Spirit of God takes pains, and is sufficient for leading all men in the way wherein they should walk; yet, we must compell them, as if either He needed our help, or we resolved to share with Him the glory of their conversion. Thus God (who loves us all infinitly better then one any of us doth another) leaves us, upon our own hazard, a freedom in our choice, albeit we poor miscreants compell one another, denying to our fellow-creatures that freedom which he allowes all the Creation. I wish we would consider how each man eats, drinks, cares for his family and performes all common duties, rational enough without any compulsion; and yet, in the affairs of Religion, wherein doubtless man is led by a far more infallible assistance, there are many slips committed.

mitted, daily and groſsly, notwithſtanding of all the pains taken, and force uſed by one man towards another. Thus it fairs with us as with Patients, whom when the Phyſitians ſtints to a narrow dyet, then they loath even that food, which their unreined appetite would never have rejected. And thus makes me apt to believe, that if Laws and Law-givers did not make Hereticks vain, by taking too much notice of their extravagancies, the world ſhould be no more troubled with theſe, then they are with the Chimeras of Alchimiſts *and* Philoſophers. *And it fairs with them as with Tops, which, how long they are ſcourged, keep foot and run pleaſantly, but fall how ſoon they are neglected and left to themſelves.*

In order to which, it was wittily obſerved by our great King James *the Sixth, that the Puritans of his age ſtrove with him, and yet ceded*

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at first, in a difference between them and the Shoe-makers of Edinburgh: *For, not only pleases it their humour to contend where they may gain honour and can loss none, but likewayes, by contesting with Monarchs, they magnifie to the people their pious courage, assuring the world, that such attempts require a particular assistance from heaven; and when their jangling hath extorted some concessions from the Magistrate, (as ordinarily it doth) then they press that success as an infallible mark of the* Jure-divinoship *of their quarrel. Albeit, I confess, that when these, not only recede from the canonized Creed of the Church, but likewayes incroach upon the Laws of the State, then, as of all others, they are the most dangerous; So, of all others, they should be most severely punished.*

Opinion, kept within it's proper bounds, is an pure act of the mind:

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and ſo it would appear, that to puniſh the body for that which is a guilt of the ſoul, is as unjuſt as to puniſh one relation for another. And this blood-thirſty zeal, which hath reigned in our age, ſuppoſes our moſt mercifull God to be of the ſame temper with theſe pagan Deities, who deſired to have their Altars gored with blood; and being devils themſelves, delighted in the deſtruction of men: whereas the Almighty, who delights not in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live, hath left no warrand upon holy Record, for perſecuting ſuch as diſſent from us; but even then when He commands that the Prophets, who tempts others to idolatry, ſhould be ſlain, yet, ſpeaks He nothing of puniſhing theſe who were ſeduced by them. And why ſhould we ſhew ſo much violence in theſe things whereof we can ſhow no certain evidence? as ordinarily we cannot

not in circumfundamental debates. Are we not ready to condemn to day, as Phanatick, what yesterday was judged Jure-divino? *And do not even those who persecuted others for their opinions, admire why they should be, upon that score, persecuted themselves? So that (victory depending upon event) we legitimat the persecutions, to be used by others, against our selves, by the persecutions used by our selves, against others. Our Saviour forbids us to pluck up the tears, lest the wheat be pulled up with it; and how can the most pious persecutors know, that the Saints are not destroyed with the sinners?*

It is remarkable, that our Saviour disarmed zealous Peter, *even when he was serving Him in person, in His greatest straits, and against the most profligat of His enemies, the Jews: and that to prevent the irregular zeal even of the first and best*

beſt of Chriſtians, the bleſſed Apoſtles, their divine Maſter thought it fit to arme them not with ſwords, but with ſcrips, and to root out of their hearts all thoughts of violence, did oft inculcat in them, that His Kingdom was not of this world; convinceing them by an excellent argument, that He had no need of armes or armies; for elſe He could have commanded thouſands of Angells. Did ever God command the Jews to war againſt any neighbouring nation becauſe they were Pagans (a quarrel which would have laſted till all the world had been conquered) Or, did our Saviour leave in legacie to his ſervants, that they ſhould force others to turn proſylits, which doubtleſſe he had done, if he had reſolved to allow ſuch a rude mean of converſion? All which makes me admire, why in our late troubles, men really pious, and naturally ſober, could have been

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so transported, as to destroy whom they could not convince, and to perswade these who were convinced, that Religion obliged them to destroy others.

My heart bleeds when I consider how scaffolds were dyed with Christian blood, and the fields covered with the carcasses of murthered Christians; and its probable, that there were more damned by unprepared deaths, in the fields, then were saved by peeping Sermons in incendiary Churches; and in this, I admire the clemency of our Royal Master, who, albeit His cause was more just then theirs, albeit He might have convinced them by obtruding to them their own practices: yet, hath rather chosen to command with His Scepter then His Sword. But, if the glory of God were the mark at which these do levell, Why bestow they not their zeal, rather in converting such as scarce know or acknowledge that there

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is a God? And why are they more enraged against these who agree with them in most things, then these who dissent from them in all? Take not Christians more pains to refute one another, then to convince Gentiles? And stand not some Episcopists and Presbyterians at greater distance, then either do with Turks and Pagans? And to evidence, that rather humour then piety occasions our differences, we may easily percieve, that the meaner the subject is, the heat is always the greater.

If I had ever known so much as one whose faith had been the trophy of a debate, I should allow of debates in maters of Religion: but seeing men cannot be convinced by miracles, it were ridiculous to presse conversion by arguments. All the Divines in Europe could not press the best founded of their contraverted and polemick truths, with so much scripture,

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or ſo many miracles as our bleſſed Saviour did His own divinity (which is the foundation of all truths) And yet the Jews almoſt and all the world beſides, ſlighted this infallible doctrine; And to evidence that there is a ſeaſon of grace, independent from arguments, did not many thouſands turn proſylits at Peters ſermon: whom all our Saviours homilies and miracles could not perſwade. If one ſhould ſay, that the teſtimony of a few fiſher-men ſhould not be believed in a mater of ſo great conſequence, as is the ſalvation of the whole world, eſpecially when they did depone as witneſſes, in a matter wherein both their honour and livelyhood was concerned, might not this ſtagger ſome mean Chriſtian? And yet I believe theſe truths ſo much the more, becauſe ſuch as theſe were its firſt aſſerters; for, certainly it is one of the greateſt of miracles, that ſo few, and

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so illiterate persons were able to convince the whole world. Thus we see, that one may account that a miracle which another looks upon as a folly; and yet, none but Gods Spirit can decide the controversie. Maters of Religion and Faith, resembling some curious Pictures and optick Prismes, which seems to change shapes and colours, according to the several stances from which the spectator views them.

The ballance of our judgments hath catched such a bruise by Adams fall, that scarce can we by them know the weight of any argument. But, which is worse, there is as great a defect in our partial weighing, as in the scales themselves: For, when we take either the pro or con. of any controversie into our Patronage, we throw always in arguments into that scale, wherein our own opinion lyes, without ever taking leisure to consider

what may be alledged for the antipode proposition: and then, when we receive an answer, our invention is busied, not in pondering how much conviction it hath in it, but by what slight it may be answered; and thus either passion, interest or frequent meditation, are still the weights which cast the ballance.

This fiery zeal hath likewayes made an other pimple flash out in the face of the phanatick Church, and that is, a conceit that the Saints have the only right to all Gods creatures, the wicked being only usurpers and not masters of them: But, I have heard this opinion (so beastly is it) confuted by Balaam's asse, who could tell it's Master, Am not I thine own asse? When Aaron and the people did covenant without Moses, then every man did bring his ear-rings to make up the golden calf. And we have lived in an age, wherein we have seen

our Countrey-men, like the Chaldeans, *take the furniture both of the Temple and of the Kings Houſe, and carry them away to their* Babylon *of confuſions; and in an age wherein ſober men were forced to lend monies, to buy for their own armes the heavy ſhekles of ſlavery,*

Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum.

Religion doubtleſs aims at two great deſignes, one is like the firſt Table, to perſwade us to adore God Almighty. Another is to perſwade us, like to the ſecond Table, to love our neighbour, and to be a mean to ſettle all theſe jealouſies; and compeſce all theſe animoſities which intereſt might occaſion; and this appears by the Doxology jubilyed by the Angels at our Saviours birth, Glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men. *And therefore, as every private Chriſtian ſhould be tollerated by*

his fellow-subjects, to worship God inwardly according to his conscience; So all should conspire in that exterieur uniformity of worship, which the Laws of his Country injoins. The first remark which God made of man after the Creation, was, that it was not fit for man to be alone; there was only one Ark amongst the Jews by Gods own appointment. And seing the Gospel tearms the Church Christ's Spouse, it were absurd to think, that He will divorce from her upon every error or escape; especially, seing His blessed mouth hath told us, that under the Gospel it is not lawfull to divorce upon all occasions; and if He will not for these, deny her to be His Spouse, much less should we deny her to be our mother. May not one, who is convinced in his judgment, that Monarchy is the best of Governments, live happily in Venice or Holland? And that traveller were absurd, who would

would rather ſquable with theſe amongſt whom he ſojourns, then obſerve theſe rites and ſolemnities which are required by the Laws of the places where he lives? What is once ſtatuted by a Law, we all conſent to, in chooſing Commiſsioners to repreſent us in theſe Parliaments where the Laws are made; and ſo if they ordain us to be decimated, or to leave the Nation if we conform not, we cannot ſay, when that Law is put to execution, that we are oppreſt; no more then we could complain, if one did remove us legally from theſe Lands which he purchaſ'd from our Truſtee, whom we had impowered to ſell it.

As David ſaid to Saul, 1 Sam. 26. 20. why went the King out to catch a flea? So may I ſay to our great Divines, why contravert they about ſhadows? Is it fit that Chriſtians, who find it too great a task to

govern their private souls, should be so much concerned how the Church is governed by others? Wherefore, seing many have been saved who were most inexpert in these questions, and that foolish zeal, passion, and too much curiositie therein, hath damned many, I may conclude, that to pry in these, is neither necessary, because of the first, nor expedient, because of the last.

Since discretion opened my eyes, I have alwayes judg'd it necessar for a Christian, to look oftner to his Practice of Piety, *then to his* Confession of Faith, *and to fear more the crookedness of his will, then the blindness of his judgment, delighting more to walk on from grace to grace, working out the work of his own salvation with fear and trembling, then* to stand still *with the Galileans curiously gazing up to heaven. True Religion and undefiled*

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is to visit the widow and the father-
less; and the ditray drawn up against
the damned spirits shall be, That when
our Saviours poor ones were hungry,
they did not feed them; when they
were naked, they did not cloath them,
without mentioning any thing of
their unbelief in maters of Contro-
versie or Government. And there-
fore I hope, that these to whom I ad-
dress my self in this Discourse, will
rather believe me to be their friend,
because of their piety, then their ene-
my, because of their errors.

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THE VIRTUOSO, OR STOICK.

ALbeit man be but a ſtatue of duſt kneaded with tears, moved by the hid engines of his reſtleſs paſſions, a clod of earth, which the ſhorteſt feaver can burn to aſhes, and the leaſt ſhower of rheums waſh away to nothing; Yet makes he as much noiſe in the world, as if both the Globes (theſe glorious Twaines) had been un-wombed from that formleſs Chaos; by the midwifry of his wit; he ſpeaks thunder, *Atheiſme.*

looks lightning, breaths storms, and by the eloquence of his own vanity, perswads himself that his commands are able to unhinge the Poles. From which boundless pride, I confidently conclude, that if a natural Instinct, or as the Stoicks terme it, ὁρμη προς τ θεον, had not irresistably bowed his faith to assent to a Deity, he had never, neither upon design nor in complyance to custom (as Atheists alledge) suffer'd to creep into his Creed, that there was one greater then himself, who could rein his affections, and bound their effects, according to the dictates of his irresistable will.

And albeit Regiments of Arguments, levyed both from the stately fabrick of heavens arched Pend, and from the inimitable embroidery of earths flowry Boul, be requisite for conquering the infidelity of others, and for rendring them tributaries to that all-forming Essence: Yet, doth my faith render up the arms of it's depraved reason, and turn Prosolyte

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to this divine truth, upon the sole sight of one of these dying Atheists; who, upon any surprisal, do with amazement throw up their eyes to heaven, as if they sent their looks in ambassade to beg assistance from thence; and cry, *God save me*, as if these beastly souls, when attaqued unexpectedly, knew whence their health were to be expected: Like to other sick brutes, who when assaulted by sickness, are, by the hand of that same storge and instinct, led to some herb or flower, which is an Apothecary shop appointed by nature for them.

Neither think I these arguments which are twisted together of three propositions so strong as these Instincts are; where truth, like the Sun, seems to dart home it's light in one unperceiveable act, whereas in these, pur-blind nature may be mistaken, not only in judging of the truth of either of the three parts, but likewise of their connexion and allyance. I know that that miscreant,

who began his hell upon earth; by being burnt at *Tholouse* for theorick Atheisme, did upon his first approach to the Fire, cry, *O God*: Whereupon, being taxt by the assisting Jesuit, answered, that these and such like expressions were the offspring of custom: But poor soul, he might have considered, that seing he had creept from his cradle into that error, and had run his glass to it's last sand, in propagating that hellish conceit: That therefore this expression was rather a confession then an escape, rather the product of a rational soul then of depraved custom; for as it was in it self a divine truth, so it was in him contrary to a settled habit.

There is another Caball of Atheists, who think that this Beleef was at first; but the quaint *Leger-de-main* of some strongly-pated Statesman; who to over-awe the capriciousness of a giddy multitude, did forge this opinion of a rewarder of all humane actions: And to enforce this, do instance

ſtance *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, whoſe palpable cheats grew up in their ſucceſſors into religions; and whoſe inventions were received with as much bigotrie, by the wiſeſt of men, as is that Deity which is now the object of our adorations. Wherefore (ſay they) ſeing the rational ſoul hath failed ſo oft, and ſo abſurdly in its diſcoveries, how, or why, ſhould we ſubmit our ſelves ſlaviſhly to it's determinations? For that which doth at ſome times erre, can never at any time be concluded infallible.

To theſe I anſwer, that albeit, as to the particular way of worſhip, the world is oft times deluded. And albeit, even as to their apprehenſions of this incomprehenſible Eſſence, multitudes be ſome times miſled; Yet, theſe ſtaggering Fancies fix this great Truth, *that there is a Supream Who muſt be adored*: For if this innate Inſtinct did not coopere with theſe impoſtures, in gaining an aſſent no their fictitious Religions and

Hierarchies, it were impossible for any humane Authority to establish Principles so remote from reason, and to subjugate by these even the mildest tempers. But I take the root from which these errors do spring, to be, that the twilight of darkned reason glimpsing to man, that *impressa* of the divine Image, which though much decayed, yet rests still upon his soul; and not being able, because of the faintness of his light, and the decay of that divine *Impressa*, to discern exactly what that Deity is, with whose image it is signeted; believes implicitely with a profound respect, any who hath the confidence to obtrude any knowledge of it upon them. Concluding in the conclave of their own thoughts, that none durst contemn so far, that omnipotent Thunder-darter, as to vend their own Fancies for sacred Oracles. And albeit these hoodwinked Nations did erect a *πανθεον* in their own hearts, wherein all these Vice-gods were worshiped; Yet were

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all these but representations of the true God; for His Omnipotency and Power was adored in their *Mars*; His Omniscience in their *Appollo, &c.* And it is very probable that the Heathens admired so each attribute of God Almighty, that they thought each deserved distinct Altars; so that their errors had their rise from rather too much then too little respect; and that as the same Ocean receives several names from the several shoars it washes, so, according to the several operations of the most High, did these deluded Pagans establish several Deities. But that all these did ultimatly terminat in one, is clear from the Inscription of that Athenian Altar, *To the unknown God*; from the designation of συμβωμοι, from their common feasts or θεοξενια; from the adjunct of *Delphicus* given to *Appollo*, which in Greek signifies *unus*; as *Macrobius* observes, from their Altars erected, *Diſque Deabuſque omnibus*, and from the general invocation of all the

Deities

Deities joyntly subjoyned to all their particular sacrifices. So that the great and all-comprehending *Idea*, wherein he is represented, as in one big mirrour to us, was by them broke in pieces, and in each of these pieces taken alone did they see a Deity, though much abridged; Whereas all these pieces, when set together, did represent but one, and each piece did then shew but a part. But to evidence that our belief of a Deity is not a state and traditionall imposture, I would willingly know if ever the skilfullest of Sathans emissaries was able to induce the world to believe that there was no God; which (doubtless) might have at some occasions contributed much to some mens politick designs, and which that rebell would have attempted, if either God had not restrained him, or himself had not known it impracticable. And it is most remarkable, that the first promoters of that divine Doctrine were persons, who, both by precept and practice, decryed

Ambition

Ambition and declined State imployments; and ſo it were abſurd to think that they invented theſe in ſubordination to State Projects.

There is alſo much force in that Argument, wherein from the nature of propheſying, is concluded the *being* of a God: for, to foreſee, is doubtleſs a way of ſeeing, far above the reach of humane nature; man not being able to conclude but that, What is poſſible upon both parts, may come to paſs upon either of its parts. And hence it was, that the Heathens themſelves termed this prediction *divination*, as if it could not be but divine. As alſo, if there were not a God, but that this were a fiction, it would follow, that errour and deluſion (ſuch as this *ex hypotheſi*) were able, and actually did, of all other things, frame a man's ſoul moſt to virtue: and that the beſt of men (ſuch as are the adorers of a Deity) were both the greateſt cheats and block-heads. All which, are

are absurdities to be hiss'd at by all who are masters of the meanest portion of humane reason.

There lurketh much curious contemplation in pondering, how that albeit the parents of all heathnish Religions, have been incomparably the chiefest witts in their times; for else they could not have impress'd the spirits of their disciples with such abstract principles; Yet, all their Models, seem repugnant to common reason: and they have choisd to teach principles which seem ridiculous.

Thus the Fictions related by the Poets of their gods, the Rites used by the *Romans*, and the Fopperies of the *Alcoran*, are absurdities unworthy of a rational belief, if man were not acted by an innate principle, to place the mysteries of Religion above his reason.

By which we see, that the imputation cast upon the Scriptures of their contrariety to reason, chocks likewayes the principles of all Nations;

tions: and certainly, if there were nothing revealed to us in Religion, but what the short line of our reason might fadom, the omnipotency of God, and the weakness of our own reason, should remain still unknown: and seing our reason is only suitable to our nature, certainly if that infinit essence and it's mysteries might be comprehended by that same reason, which measureth things finit, we might conclude God to be finit likewayes; and is it not impudence in us who know not the ebbing and flowing of the sea, nor the reason why the Adamant draweth the iron, to repine because we cannot comprehend the essence of God Almighty? and then vainly to conclude, that because we cannot graſp within the short armes of our understanding, the vast bulk of the Deity, that there is no Deity? A conclusion as absurd, as if one should say, that when the nimble wings of an arrow transport it above our sight, it did leave off to be, when it left off to be perceived.

And

And I am of opinion, that mysteriousness suits rarely well with divine Truths, the finest things using alwayes to be best wrapt up: thus if we listen to our hid inclinations, we will find a pleasing veneration in reserved silence; and our curiosity will swiftly follow, what by it's retiredness fleeth from us: silent groves whose bush-top trees lay their heads together, as in a conspiracy to resist the Sun's entry, and powder its light with Sables, creat's a veneration in us. And as the Heathens did choise groves, So did the primitive Christians light their Devotions with torches and candles, intimating thereby that umbrag'd silence was an excellent Shryn for sincere devotions; and in this sense, it may be, the Word of God is said to be a Lantern to our steps, and the seven Churches are compared to seven Candlsticks. Did not our Saviour teach His disciples in parables? and was not the Ark vailed from the eyes of the people? the Pagans dispensed their

their divinity in Hieroglyphicks; and amongst humane Writers, the most mysterious carry still the Lawrels: And why should we vainly wish to comprehend the nature of the Deity, seing *Moses*, God's intimate, and minion, could not have that allowance? And God himself, when for our necessary instruction He would discover something of Himself to us, is forced *per ἀνθρωποπαθειαν*, (as Divines speak) to discover Himself in a stile borrowed from humane frailty, and to expres His infinit affections by our disordered passions.

I believe, that *Socrates*, natur's greatest disciple, and the Deity's *protomartyr*, was a prosolyt of the same faith, which we profes, and had his large soul illuminated by that Sun of righteousnes, whose refulgent rayes are now the bright torches of the christian Church. Neither is my belief in this staggered by the silence of his co-temporary Writers, as to this particular: seing these, not being of the same persuasion with him, but being

being convinced of his moral worth, did deſcrive his opinions ſuitably to their own apprehenſion. Thus did theſe pagan Hiſtorians admire the great Saviour of mankind, only for His morall accompliſhments, without reaching theſe divine principles, by which He was acted. The *Stoicks* likewayes were in all probability, a tribe of *John* Baptiſt's, and God having reſolved to purge the Univerſe of its original unrighteouſneſs by that bleſſed *Manna* which came down from heaven to give life to the world, did by their doctrine of abſtemiouſneſs, as by a ſpare dyet, prepare its body for receiving that divine Doſe. And certainly, if men had disbanded that execrable troup of luſts, againſt which theſe preached, and had liſtned (as the *Stoicks* Book of Diſcipline injoyned) to their own private conſciences, and had by retiredneſs abſtracted themſelves from the reach of temptations, it had facilitated much their converſion: for if the young Lawyer, who came to

conſult

conſult Chriſt how to draw up his Securities of heaven, and of his portion there, had believed their Oracle, which decry'd riches as the unneceſſary baggadge of man's life, and the mudd which clog'd the wings of the ſouls contemplation, and kept it from ſoaring its natural pitch, he had never refuiſed our Saviour's yoke, becauſe he was commanded to ſell all and to give it to the poor. Thus likewayes if the rich glutton had dyeted himſelf according to the ſcant preſcript of their allowance, his ſcoarched tongue had not ſtood in need of a drop of watter to allay it's thirſt. Neither had *Nicodemus* needed to have mantled himſelf in the darkneſs of the night, when he came to our Saviour, out of fear, leſt he ſhould have been diſcovered; ſeing their doctrine might have taught him, that *fear* was a paſſion, unworthy to be lodged in the ſoul of man: And that there is nothing here, which a man either ſhould, or needeth to fear.

But albeit neither *instinct* nor *faith*, were able to convince us infallibly of this truth; Yet is it both more satisfying, and more safe to embrace this opinion, then its contrary. More satisfying, because man's *summum bonum* here, being lodged in the tranquillity of his spirit; That which can best plaine and smooth the rugged and uneven face of his frequent and inevitable misfortunes, must be doubtless the most carressable of opinions: wherefore, seing nothing can strengthen so much man's frailty, nothing check so soon his dispair, nothing feed so much his hope, nor animate so much his courage, as to believe that there is a God, who beareth the heavyest end of all our crosses upon the shoulders of His *love*; who is able to turn, or arrest the giddie wheel of fortune by the strong hand of His Omnipotency; and who twisteth Lawrels of inimaginable joyes for the heads of these who fight under his banners. If a man leaned

not

hot his weary soul upon this divine Rest, he were not only an enemy to nature, but even to his own happiness. What rocks of danger could men escape, if blind-fortune did sit at the helme, and if vertuous persons complain, as affairs are presently stated? that their merites are not weighed with indifferency enough in the Scales of justice, What might be expected, if hazard got the ballance to mannage? And these who leave their native countries, when they perceive that the Law beginneth to render its Oracles in an unconstant Stile, and with a trembling voice, behooved to leave the world, if this Anarchy were by Atheisme established? For as a wise *Stoick* well observed, ουκ εστι ζην εν τω κοσμω κενω θεων, καὶ κενω προνοιας. *It were impossible to live in a world, void of God and void of providence.*

It is likewayes most safe; for if there be a Deity, doubtless these obdured Atheists, whose obstinacy hath conjured their consciences to a

constrain'd silence, and brybed these infallible Witnesses, to depone what suited best with their wild resolutions, or rather neglected resolutly their sincere depositions: then certainly, the just flames of that God's indignation, whom they have disclaimed, will heat for them a furnace in hell, beyond what the other damned spirits shall meet with in their torture. Whereas albeit there be no tribunall, from which such a thunder-bolt sentence may be darted, nor no supreme Judge by whom our actions shall be canvass'd, Then these who have paid their adorations at His altars, shall be in no danger. Wherefore, seing it should be the task of a *Virtuoso*, to turn out all such thoughts as may raise a mutiny in his breast; it were a foolish toy in him to entertain Atheisme, which is a Nursery of disquietness: for whose breast could enjoy a calme whilst a concernment of so much weight, as his externall portion, did hing from the weak threed of a mere

may be; and of such a may be, as marches so near with a will not be?

But if ye would know, what disquieting vapours Atheisme sends up to the brain, when it is once drunk in: go to the horrour-creating beds of a dying Atheist, whose roaring voice, might awake the most lethargick conscience that ever the devil lull'd a sleep. There ye shall know by the Urinal of his eyes, and the water standing therein, what convulsion-fits his soul suffers; and shall learn from his own mouth, how grievously his diseased soul is streatched upon the rack of despair, then it is, that the voluminous Registers of his conscience, which duly formerly clasp'd in some unsearched corner of his memory, are laid open before him; and the devil who hitherto gave him the lessening end of the Prospect, to survey his sins in, turns now its magnifying end to his fearfull eye. It should be then the grand design of a Philosopher, to order his own breast aright, before

he go abroad to view the Works of the Creation; least if he leave its door unbolted, the devil steal from him his richest Jewel, whilest he sweats to enrich his contemplation with what is of far less consequence.

Superstition.

It is no wild fancy to think, that *Atheisme* hath been the product of *Superstition*; for certainly, many who were by humour *Gallio's*, finding that Religion exacted from men such inhumane homage to its recognizance, as was the sacrificing children amongst the Heathens, wearying Pilgrimages, and hectick Lents amongst Christians, did resolve rather to deny than to adore such Deities. Thus *Lucretius* revolted upon *Agamemnon's* sacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* for the grecian safety, crying out,

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

And

And thus *Petronius Arbiter* a monck of the same Gell, says that,

Primus in orbe deos timor fecit, fulmina cœlo
Cum caderent ———

And to prevent this, our Saviour doth oft inculcat, that His yoke is easie and His burden is light. And doubtless, as the straighteſt line is alwayes the shorteſt; So the moſt rational designes are alwayes easilyeſt effectuated; and as *Seneca* hath excellently observed, *Licet Deus non esset, tamen non peccarem ob peccati vilitatem.* There is something of meanness in the gallanteſt, and moſt alluring sin. And this is moſt energetically expreſt in Scripture, whilſt it is said *that the wicked weary themseles by their sins.* A principle, which not only the magiſterial Authority of God's Spirit, but our experience likewayes places above the reach of all scruples: for are not the inquietuds, the cheats, and palliated parricids, and sacriledges brooded by ambition, the

churlishness and close-handedness parented by avarice, effects unworthy to be father'd upon any rational soul; And at which we should scarlet our cheeks with blushes, as well as empale them through fear, and should stand as much in awe of our consciences, as most do of a Deity? Yet, it may be we are in a mistake, whilst we place Superstition in the excess of such adorations, as are either commanded or indifferent: for seing the object of our adorations, God Almighty, is in Himself infinit, we can never exceed either in our respects to Him, or in the expression of them. Excess being only admissible, where the object is finit, and where we attribute mor then is due, which can never be here. Thus if Kneeling be lawfull at any occasion, I hardly see why it is not lawfull to kneel at all occasions. And if these exteriour rites and ceremonies (some whereof are allow'd in all Churches) be judged requisit, for expressing our vassalage and subordination to

God

God our maker, either they are altogether unwarrantable, or else we should proportion them (as far as in us lyes) to that infinit object. And seing the Angels are said to cover their faces with their wings before Him, the Patriarchs to fall upon their face and worship; and our adorable Saviour, in that conflict wherein He represented sinfull man, is by *Matthew* remark'd to have fall'n upon His face, by *Mark* to have fall'n upon the ground, and by *Luke* to have kneel'd. What is crawling man, that he should account such gestures fond Superstition? It would appear then, that Superstition consists in man's worshiping God by meanes unlawfull, such as are children-sacrifices, and such like, whereby His divine attributes are mis-represented, and tainted with cruelty, or tyrannie, and not in an excess, in such expressions of our respect as are in themselves lawfull. And if there be any strength in that argument, wherein we inforce

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the being of God, from the harmonious consent and assent of all Nations: certainly, by that same argument, we may establish the decency, if not the necessity, of Ceremonies. For, what Nation bowes to Altars, without profound and external submissions? And, who lodges upon the surface of our Globe, who payes not as the *reddendo* of their Charter to these gods whom they worship, ceremonial Adorations, wrapt up in most submissive Rites?

Why the world was created.

That God made all things for His glory, is an expression, which (I think) looks not well at the test of reason, and hath no warrand but unwary custome: for beyond all question, His glory was so brim-full formerly, that it neither needed, nor could recieve any considerable accession from this small drop. And besids this, the innate apprehension we have of doing any thing for one's glory, dyes this expression with some guilt; Yet, I confess, we may warran-

warrantably ſay, that when perverſe man calls His power in queſtion, or controverts His being *only wiſe*; that then, God for our inſtruction, and the vindication of His own glorious Attributes, doth many things for His own glory. And in this ſenſe, the Scripture ſaith, that God will puniſh the wicked, and deliver His people, for His own glory. And wherever it is ſaid, that God doth, or createth any thing, for His own glory, it is doubtleſs in this ſenſe; in which man (who is made after His image) may act for his own glory without any vanity; albeit to act for his own glory in the firſt ſenſe, were in him criminal. It is then more probable, that God being infinitly good, and all good being *ſui communicativum*, that His deſign in creating the world, was to communicate and diſplay His goodneſs: and upon this baſe probably hath *Ariſtotle* reared up his errour, of *the worlds exiſtency from all eternity*: for, ſeing God was *ab*

aterno

aterno infinitly good, and that good is ſtill communicative: he did (it may be) conclude, that *ab aterno*, God did communicate His goodneſs: which could only be to creatures. And therefore it was neceſſar that there ſhould have been a world: and ſome Philoſophers have aver'd, that the world flowed from God *per emanationem*, *ab aterno*, as beames are lanced out from the body of the Sun. Albeit I be none of *Ariſtotle's* Partiſans, nor holds my philoſophy of him as my Superior; Yet I cannot but think, that God hath communicated His goodneſs to worlds prior to ours, which is but of 5662 years ſtanding. But I am not ſo arrogant as to determine the time of the firſt worlds birth, nor how many Cadets it hath had; reſolving to leave its Date blank, to be fill'd up by ſome arrogant Pretender. Neither ſhould I accuſe mine own thoughts of Hereſie, for concluding, that probably there are preſently thouſands of worlds co-exiſting with ours, where-

of

of some, it may be, are governed by Maximes. If not contrair, yet at least different from these which are our Canons. All which worlds, albeit they were actually subsisting, would ly in the bosome of the large imaginarie Spaces, but like so many small balls in the corner of a large Tennis-court. I shall not for confirming this opinion, cite, with an ignorant french Curate, the parable of the Lepers, where it is said, *Nonne sunt decem mundi?* because I know that it was wittily answered, *Sed ubi sunt reliqui novem?*

That Eternity is all present, and that in it, there is neither preterit, nor future, but a conceit, and a needless mysterie imposed upon our belief, which is really more mysterious then the Trinity; who knows but it is founded upon an expression in *Cicero*, wherein Eternity is call'd *æternum instans*? For how then can it be said, that God was before the world? for *Was* is preterit, and before Eternity.

before the world there was, as themselves alledge, no time; and so there was a *was* in eternity. Is not God call'd by Himself Alpha and Omega, first and last, the one whereof is preterite and the other future? And it is said, *Rev.* 16. 5. *O glorious God, Who art, and wast, and shalt be.* And if it be answered, That this is only fitted to our capacities; certainly, that is all is craved: for, doubtlesse there is no such reall thing, as these three measures of time, even in things finit and created; for they ow their being only to our conceit, as well in the one as in the other. And when God descriv'd Himself by His name JAH *I am*, it was not mean't, that no measure of time could be attributed to Him, but the present; but rather, that what He was, was to man incomprehensible. And that all we could know of Him, was that He existed; and by that expression, that all things to Him are present, was mean't, that by His Knowledge *intuitive*, (as Divines terme it) He com-

comprehends all things which were to be, as if they were really present; and this is spoke, not of his being, but of his knowledge. Neither can it be concluded that if *Was* or *shall be*, may be attributed to God, then He must be mutable, and that *Was*, denotats mutation; for as I said formerly, these are but termes, not really existing, and so cannot import any real mutation.

Providence.

How God imployes His uncontrolable Scepter, after what fashion He governs this lower world, and in what characters He writs His eternal Decrees, hath been the arrogant study of some mad-cap Pedants, who talk as magisterially of His Decrees, as if they were of His cabinet Councel. And albeit to deterre such bold intruders, He destroyed thousands of His ancient people, because they look'd into His Ark; Yet, such is the petulancie of some latter Witts, that they must needs look in to His unsearchable bosome, and there ma-

rishall

rishall all His Decrees, and conceit they understand His way of working; and thus in disputing of objects, infinitly removed by their obstruseness from their sense, they shew themselves more ridiculous, then these who would dispute concerning the qualities of an object, before it come so near; as that they may know of what species it is: for seing it is a maxime, that there is nothing in our understanding, which hath not past to it thorow our senses, and that the things of God are immaterial, and so fall not under the cognizance of our senses; It must be folly to think, that any humane scrutinie can find out mysteries that are so unsearchable, except they be imparted to them by immediat revelation; a kind of correspondence which I concieve few now a dayes holds with heaven. Yet, I confess, it is as hard to confute their fictions, as it is impossible for them to come by the knowledge of them. But as this study is unattainable, so it is unprofitable

profitable for seeing God's art of governing the world, and His Decrees of saveing or damning its Citizens is a trade we shall never be able to practise, Why should we have such an itch to understand it? It should be enough to us, to be saved, albeit we know not how, or by what manner of Decrees; except we be of the same mettal with that foolish patient, who would not be cured, because the Physician would not shew him how the cure was to be composed, and what were its ingredients. And is it not the Zenith and top-branch of madness for us to pry into Go'ds unsearchable Decrees, who know not how our neighbour's calf is formed in its Dames belly?

It was a narrow Omnipotency, which some mean spirit'd Heathens allowed their *Jupiter*, when they conceited that he wanted leasure to dispose of trifles.

Non licet exiguis rebus adesse Jovi.

For if the twinkling of an eye, were

were not time sufficient for God to dispose upon all the affairs of this world, then there might be a greater power then His; and the power to dispose so suddainly, were wanting to his Omnipotency, and so He were not infinit, and consequently no God.

Neither was the Rodomontade of *Alphonsus*, King of *Portugal*, more pious then this; when he alleadged that if God had made use of His advice in framing the world, He had helped many things in it, which he now could justly taxe of errour.

These two extremes, are the two Poles, whereon the globe of Atheisme turns it self; some, out of an impious humility, complementing God out of His Authority, by denying that He disposes of the meaner size of business, and others detracting from His providence, in attributing His operations to chance and fate, or branding them with injustice or imprudence.

There are among School-men two opinions

opinions which diſpute victory with (almoſt) equal forces. The one whereof, will have God the ſole agent, and to make uſe of ſecundary cauſes, only, as of ciphers, theſe ſay that it is not fire which burns, but that God burns *ad præſentiam ignis*; nor water which cools, but that God cools *ad præſentiam aquæ*: which is, in my opinion, the ſame thing as to ſay, that God jugl'd with man; and as Charmers do preſented ingredients, but wrought by hid means.

In too near an affinity with this, is the Doctrine of Predeſtination as ſome teach it, wherein they will have man to play the mere ſpectator in his own Salvation: and albeit there be a free and full tender of mercy made to loſt man, yet will not allow him any power to embrace or reject it; judging this one of the neceſſary appanages of God's Omnipotency, that He doth ſave or condemn *ex mero beneplacito*, never conſidering, that the queſtion is not,

what God can do, but what He doth: And that it derogats nothing from His Omnipotency, that He will not damn poor sinners, who according to their Doctrine cannot be blamed for their obstinacy; because it was never free to them to do otherwise: and how (I pray you) could the sluggard in the parable, have been punished, for not improving his talent, and laying it up in a napkin, if God had by His Decree cast an insolvable knot upon that napkin, wherein it was laid up?

The other opinion, will have secundary causes the sole agents; and teaches, that God in the first moulding of each creature, did dote it with innate qualities, sufficient to act every thing requisit for its subsistence; but in sign of its subjection to its Maker, reserved to Himself, as His prerogative royal, a power to bend and bow these inclinations upon extraordinary occasions, for the good of the Universe, or when His infallible Omni-prudence should think

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expedient. Thus, when that All-eyeing eye of the world, the Sun, was first turn'd off the frame, it had in Commission to sow its influences over the world without any retardment; Yet was its motion arrested, and turn'd back by an extraordinar warrand in the dayes of *Joshua* and *Zedekiah*. Thus they make the creatures resemble a Watch, which after it is once compleated, goes by its own Springs and Wheels, without the Artist's extraordinary assistance. Yet, when either its motion becomes irregular, or when the owner finds it fit, it is unpeec'd, or hath its Index put forward or backward at his pleasure. And this last, seems to suit best with the principles, both of Christianity and Stoicisme. With Christianity, because it gives a check to presumption, and suffers not man to think himself the sole arbiter of his own condition; because God can easily quash these babylon-like fancies, which his topless ambition is still a building; and to his despair,

becauſe a lift from the ſtrong arme of Providence, may heave him up above all his difficulties.

This correſponds beſt likewayes with Stoiciſme, becauſe it pulls the hands of a ſluggard from his boſome and ſetts them awork to prepare for himſelf, and not to repoſe his unreaſonable hopes upon divine Providence; which only keeps theſe from ſinking, who endeavour to ſwimme. This likewayes takes from man, all excuſe of ſining, not ſuffering him to lay over his vitiouſneſs upon Providence, a ſhift too ordinar amongſt ſuch, as miſunderſtand the taſhleſs Doctrine of the reformed Churches.

This opinion makes us likewayes underſtand, what the Heathens meant by *fortune*, which they termed *giddie*; what the Stoicks meant by *fate*, which they confeſſed to be *irreſiſtable*; and in what ſenſe Philoſophers concluded, that each man could hammer out his own fortune. As to the Pagan's *fortune*, it cannot be thought, that ſeing it was by them-

themſelves confeſs'd to be *blind*, that they could truſt it with the reines of the admirably manag'd world. And ſeing they confeſs'd, that it was alwayes ſtagering and unconſtant, it cannot be thought that they could aſcrive to it, all theſe curious and juſt events, which they themſelves admired hourly. Wherefore it is probable, that the Philoſophers, having through the proſpect of nature, and by an uninterrupted experience, obſerved, that man (who acted from a freedom of ſpirit unreſtrained, either by providence or ſtarr-influences as to his ordinar operations) was of a volatile and capricious humour; therefore they concluded, that the ſtate of humane affairs, which was framed and unframed at his ill-fixt pleaſure, behoved neceſſarily to be moſt ſubject to changes. And that ſeing the victories of *Ceſar*, depended upon the inclinations of his ſouldiers, who by abandoning him, would fetch his proſperity away with them:

they had reason therefore to terme his fortune Frail and exposed to hazard.

Thus the advancment of the restless Courtier is uncertain, because it hings from the humor of his Prince, whose spirit hath some allay of unconstancy, as well as hath that of the fearfull subject, who trembls under his Scepter. And thus the oyl-consuming Student, can promise himself no applause, because the paralytick hand of the multitudes fancies, holds the scales wherein his abilities are weighed.

In fine, *fortune* was nothing to these Ancients, but the unbodyed freedom of man's will, considered abstractly from all particular persons and the innate qualities of all other creatures, (which, because they are mortal, must therefore be changable) then which nothing is more inconstant, nothing more blind.

The other branch of divine Providence, which consists in the supreme Authority, whereby God makes

makes all humane inclinations run ſometime againſt the byaſſe of their ſpecifick nature, was by them termed *fate*. And this in their mythologie they fabled to be an Adamant chain, which they faſtned to the foot of *Jupiter's* chair, meaning by its adamantine nature, that it was hard to be brok like the Adamant; and by faſtning it to *Jupiter's* chair, that it was the product of the Almighty's power. Thus *fortune* and *fate*, were to them but the right and left hands of chriſtian providence.

Theſe embodyed angels, the *Stoicks*, finding that fortunes megrim could not be cured, nor fates decrees reſcinded, and yet reſolving, in ſpight of all external accidents, to ſecure to themſelves a calmneſs of ſpirit; did place their happineſs in the contempt of all theſe follies, whoſe bloſſomes fortune could not blaſt, and ſought for happineſs in an acquieſcence to all which providence did unalterably decree; So that neither fortune nor fate could ſtand in the way of their hap-

happineſs, becauſe they ſlighted the one, and ſubmitted to the other.

And in this ſenſe, each man in their ſchools, was admitted to be Maſter-of-work to his own fortune: and that without diſparaging the omnipotent power of the great Fortune-maker, in ſubmiſſion to whom their happineſs was plac'd.

Albeit the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God, be the *baſis* of true Stoiciſme, and a firmer one then any the Heathens could pretend to; Yet, that knowledge of Him, which by the curioſity of School-men and the bigotrie of Tub-preachers, as now formed in a Body of Divinity, is of all others the leaſt neceſſary and the moſt dangerous. And whereas we did ſee God but in a Glaſs formerly, that Glaſs is now ſo miſted and foyl'd by each Pedant's flegmatick breath, that it is hard to ſee Him at all, but impoſſible to ſee Him there. And to extend a little that myſterious analogy; we are ſaid to behold God here, as in a

Glaſs

Glaſs; and as objects are beſt percieved in the ſmootheſt mirrors; So the plaineſt deſcriptions of Him, are ſtill the trueſt: for when He is ſeen by Atheiſts in the globe-glaſs of their infidelity, He appears leſs then really He is, when beheld by the Pagans in the multiplying Glaſs of Paganiſme, He appears many; and when He is look't upon in the magnifying Glaſs of Superſtition, though He appear but one, Yet He is miſrepreſented, becauſe He is repreſented, as more terrible then He deſires to appear: and ordinarily the better cut Glaſſes are, and the more artificiall, the worſe the face is by them repreſented.

That firſt Curſe which did ſowe all the world with briers and thorns, did, of all other things, fall moſt heavily upon the ſoul of man. Which becauſe it was chief in the tranſgreſsion, ought in reaſon to have been moſt tortured in the puniſhment. And now his diſquieted *Theology.*

ſpirit

ſpirit, is daily pierc'd with the prickles of thornie diſputes and debates: which, as like briers, they produce no fruit fit for alimenting that noble half of man, which is his rational ſoul; So do they, like thorns, pierce his tender conſcience, and to ſcrew his torments to their higheſt pinn; the thoughts of God, and of ſettlment in Him, which like balme ſhould cure theſe ſores, is become that hemlock, which occaſions his diſtractions, and poyſons his meditations. For, albeit the Heroes of the primitive Church, did give milk in abundance to Infant-chriſtians; Yet, many of their ſucceſſors, have mixt it ſo with the tart vinegar of contention, that that milk beginns now to crudle, and ſo is become loathſome to the appetite of tender believers. For, moſt of Churchmen, being idle, and concieving, that if they taught only the holy Scriptures, their vocation might by Laicks be undervalued as eaſy; and that they would be denyed that applauſe,

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which was due to quaintneſſe of wit, eſpecially in a ſetled Church, wherein Church-men could not draw reverence from the people, by Oracles, as did the heathen Prieſts; nor by prophecies and miracles, as did the Servants of the moſt High, under the old and new Teſtaments. Did therefore, according to their private inclinations, frame each to himſelf a new kind of Divinity. The more pragmatick ſort, and theſe whoſe humour was edged with choler, invented polemick or controverted divinity. And ſo by an inteſtine and civil war of opinions, raiſed within the bowels of Religion; did waſte and pillage that holy Canaan, which formerly flowed with the milk of ſincere Doctrine, and the honey of divine Conſolations. And then, that precious blood, which formerly purpled only pagan-ſcaffolds, dyed now the ſwords of fellow-believers: who, to propagate their private judgment, buried Churches under their rubbiſh, fed the birds of heaven

with

with the carcaſes of pious and reverend Church-men; and by the mad hands of bigott opiniaſtrity, brok to pieces all the ſacred bonds of natural and civil duties: and thus they raiſed the devil of contention, whom they could not lay again; and made this Itch of diſputing, turn the Scab of the Church.

Others again, in whoſe brains ſullen melancholy, form'd phantomes and ideas, invented ſcolaſtick Theology; and theſe, in abſtract cells, erected a Mint-houſe for coyning the droſs of their own contemplations, into wonderfull bombaſt notions: and to make them go current, in the ſuffering Church, gave them the *impreſſa* of Theology.

A third ſort, not able to ſoare their pitch in the sky of Invention, reſolved to ſet up a correſpondence with heaven: and this they called enthuſiaſtick, or inſpired, Theology. And their Cabbins were Poſt-houſes, where one might know what was reſolved lately in the conclave of heaven

heaven, whether the King or Parliament was to wear the Lawrels, and what ſhould be the iſſue of our pious rebellions. Theſe could likewiſe caſt the horoſcop of your ſalvation; and invented a ſpecies of Phyſiognomy, whereby they could tell if the marks of Grace dwelt upon a face, and if one had the traicts of an eleçt child of God. After this faſhion did they propheſie their own fancies, and call that *Providence* only which made for them.

There wants not ſome likewayes, who, out of a well meaning deſire, to make the lamp of truth darte its rayes with the clearer ſplendor, ſnuff it ſo nearly, that they extinguiſh it quyt: and leavs us nothing but the ſtink of its ſnuff; like ſome curious Phyſicians, who purge ſo frequently, that they deſtroy the body entruſted to their cure. We in this Iſland have met with ſome of theſe *Charletans*, who, I am confident, purged oftner both Church and State, then *Luke*, the beloved phyſician,

cian, would have preſcrived, if we had had the good fortune to have been his Patients.

The taleſt witt is not able to reach heaven, albeit (I know) many disjoint their witts in ſtretching them too high in the inquiry of its myſteries. Neither impute I our ſhort-coming in the knowledge of theſe myſteries, ſolly to their obſtruſneſs; but, I believe, our meditations are more clouded in relation to theſe, then really they need to be, becauſe of their innate frailty: for we ſee, that ſome who are maſters of much reaſon in things humane, betray much folly in their devotions: wherefore, I am induced to believe, that it fares with the ſoul in this, as uſually it doth with the body, whoſe pulls are proportionally the weaker, as the thing graſp'd-after is plac'd above its true reach. And ſo theſe arrogant Pretenders pull but faintly, becauſe they raiſe their meditations too high on their tip-toes: whereby they are diſabl'd from imploying

ploying all their naturall vigour, in pulling at theſe weighty and ſublime Truths, which they catch, not by that corner which is neareſt, as meanner witts do, (and ſo are more ſucceſsfull) but endeavour a fetch at what in Divinity is higheſt, by which effort, their endeavours are fainter, then theſe whoſe ſpirit is of a leſſer ſize. And theſe coloſſus witts, become the greateſt Hereticks, as theſe ordinarily are moſt burnt, whoſe fingers ofteſt ſtir up fires, and as Chirurgians have moe cuts and wounds, then any other Mechanicks, who handle not ſo oft theſe wounding tools. It is not fit that mortal man ſhould wreſtle too much with theſe myſteries, leaſt his reaſon, like *Jacob*, be forc'd to come off, halting.

Nothing hath more buſied my thoughts, then to find a reaſon why the Heathens, who were as aſſiduous and zealous too in the worſhip of their gods, as we Chriſtians, did never frequent Sermons, nor knew no ſuch part of divine Service; whereof

whereof (probably) the reason was because their Governors (whose commands amongst them were the sole *jure-divinoship* of all Ecclesiastick Rites) feared, that Church-men, if they had been licenc'd to harangue to the people, would have influenc'd too much that gross body: which was the reason likewayes, why in the primitive Church (as one of their Historians observes) *ex formula populo prædicabant, tantum antiquitas timebat δημογογες.* They preached only approved Sermons, so much did antiquity fear these leaders of the people, a practice, as is reported, lately renewed by the Duke of *Russia*: and this seemeth also to have been the reason, why all Liturgies have prick't texts for their Preachers, lest if they had been left a freedom in their choice, they had chose such as might, in the letter, have suited best with such seditious Libels as are now obtruded upon the people, in lieu of pious homilies, at remarkable or festival occasions.

tasions. Yet, I think, that our late Doctors, who can find all Doctrine in any text, would easily have eluded that canonick designe. If we should parallel the homilies, which these renowned Fathers have left, as Legacies, to posterity, with these which our age runs after, we would find, that the first were pointed lessons of mortification; which, like *Moses* rod, could draw gushes of tears from the rocky hearts of the most obdured sinners; whereas many of these last are but State-gazets, wherein the people are informed, what are the resolves of the civil Magistrate: And whereas their first institution made them Ambassadors of glad-tydings betwixt God and His people, they have made themselves Heraulds, to denounce warres betwixt God's Vice-gerent and His subjects. Thus, *Peter's* successors will oft times, like himself, rather draw the sword then watch for their Master. And since our Saviour hath disarmed them, as He did *Peter*,

and filled their hands with the keyes, these who offend them are sure to get over the head with these. I confesse, God hath not left His Church without some skilfull Pilots, to lead in His servants, with security, to the harbour of Salvation: to whom this Discourse and it's Author shall pay all respects.

The strictness of Churches.

Most of all Churches do, like coy maids, lace their bodies so strait, that they bring on them a consumption; and will have the gates of heaven to have been only made for themselves: and as this nigardlines hath possest Churches, so from that root hath stem'd the churlishness of some private Christians, who will allow God but a most inconsiderable number of these whom He hath admitted to make up His visible Church. Thus, some Pastors will only admit two or three to be guests at the Lord's Table, allowing no wedding garment, but what is of their own spinning: and others, with their uncharitable hands, blur

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the names of all their acquaintances out of the Books of Life, as if they were keepers of His Registers and Rolls; and will only have seats kept in the Church-triumphant, for three or four Sisters, who are so frugal of their devotions, as to spare them at home, to the end, they may be liberal in publick. But both these should consider, that the new *Jerusalem* is said to have moe gates then one; that *John* in his *Revelation* tells us, that numberless numbers were seen following the Lamb; and that it is not probable, that the wise Framer of the world made such a spacious dwelling as heaven, to be inhabited by so inconsiderable a number: whereas hell (in the geography of believed tradition) is only the small kernel of this small shell *the earth*. I know, that many are called and few chosen; and that the way is strait, and few enter in at it: But we should consider, that these chosen, are said to be few, in respect only of these many who are called. Which is most certain; for ten

Parts of eleven are Pagans or Mahumetans, (and all are called) of that eleventh part, many are malitious Hereticks; and amongst the residue many are flagitious and publick sinners; So that albeit the greatest part of the regular members of the visible Church were sav'd, Yet the number would be small in comparison of these others: The body of the visible Church, must (like all other bodies) be compounded of contrary elements. And albeit I am not of opinion, that this body should be suffer'd to swell with humours, yet I would not wish, that it should be macerated with purgations. It's nails (though but excrementitious parts) should not be so nearly pair'd, as that the body may bleed; yet, they should be so pared, as that christians may not scratch one another. They should feed, not upon blood, but milk: and they are unmannerly guests, who will not suffer others to sit at their Masters table with them.

It pleases my humour to con-

templar,

templat, how, that albeit all Religions war against one another; yet, are all of them governed by the same principles, and even by these principles, in effect, which they seem to abominat. Thus, albeit the cessation of miracles be cryed down by many, yet, do the most bigot relate, what miracles have been wrought by the founders of their Hierarchies, and what propheſies they have oraculouſly pronounced. And ſeing all confeſs, that God, in our dayes, breaks the proſperous upon the ſame Wheel, on whoſe top they did but lately triumph; making *fortune* adopt the oppreſt in their vice; why ſhould we talk ſo much of the ceaſing of miracles? For, doubtleſs, theſe effects are in policy, as contrair to nature, as are the ſwimming of iron, or ſweetning of rivers; or rather more: Seing in the firſt, mans will is forc'd (without which, ſuch revolutions could not be effectuated) whereas in the laſt, dull and ſenſual qualities are only wreſted:

which, as they are not so excellent, so, doubtless, are not able to make such resistance as the Soul of man: Yea, I should rather think, that the world being become old, must, doubtless, be more dim-sighted (as all old things are) then formerly; and therefore, God doth now present greater objects of admiration to our eyes then He did formerly: For, man is become so atheisticall, that if God did not presse His meditations with such infallible testimonies of the being of an irresistable power, he would, doubtless, shake of all resolutions of submitting. Thus, we see that in all the tract of *John's* Revelations, miracles grow still more frequent, the nearer the world draweth to it's grave; and, like all other bodies, the weaker it becomes, the more subject it is to all alterations, and the less is nature able to resist. And it would appear, that if miracles were requisit at first, for the establishment of Religion, even when no older Religion was to

cede

cede to it, and to make an *exit* at it's entry; much more, should miracles be necessar, for fixing any Religion against the received constitutions of a previously settled Church. But to prosecute my first design, it is remarkable, that albeit infallibility be not by all, conceded to any militant Church; yet, it is assumed by all: Neither is there any Church under the Sun, which would not fix the name of heretick, and account him (almost) reprobat, who would refuse to acknowledge the least rational of their Principles: and thus these Church-men pull up the ladders from the reach of others, after they have by them scal'd the walls of preferment themselves. That Church-men should immerse themselves in things civil, is thought excentrick to their sphere, even *in ordine ad spiritualia*: And yet, even the *Capuchins*, who are the greatest pretenders to abstract Christianity and Mortification, do, of all others, dipth most in things civil. The

Phanaticks

Phanatick enveigh against Presbyterian Gowns. The *Presbyterian* tears the Episcopal lawn Sleeves, and thinks them the whore of *Babel's* shirt. The *Episcopist* flouts at the popish Robes, as the livery of the beast. The *Antinomian* emancipats his disciples from all obedience to the Law. The *Protestant* enjoyn good works, and such are commanded, but place no merit in them. The *Roman-catholick* thinks he merits in his obedience. The *Phanatick* believs the Lords Supper but a ceremony, though taken with very little outward respect. The *Presbyterian* allowes it, but will not kneel. The *Episcopist* kneels, but will not adore it. The *Catholick* mixeth adoration with his kneeling. And thus, most of all Religions are made up of the same elements, albeit their symbolick qualities predomine in somemore then in others. And if that maxime hold, that *majus & minus non variant speciem*, we may pronounce all of them to be one Religion.

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The Church, like the river *Nilus*, can hardly condescend where it's head lyes; and as all condescend that the Church is a multitude of christians, so joyn all their opinions, and you shall find that they will have it to have, like the multitude, many heads. But in this (as in all Articles, not absolutely necessar for being saved) I make the Laws of my countrey to be my Creed: and that a clear decision herein is not absolutely necessar for Salvation, is clear from this, that many poor Clowns shall be saved, whose conscience is not able to teach their judgments how to decide this controversie, wherein so many heads have been confounded, so many have been lost, and so many have been shrewdly knockt against one another; from which flinty collisions, much fire, but little light, hath ever burst forth.

1. that Religion wch is settled by Law

God, by His Omniscience, foreseeing, that it was too dazleing a sight for the pur-blind eyes of man's soul, to behold Him invironed with the

the rayes of divine Majesty, did bestow upon us, three mirrours, wherein we might contemplat Him (as we use to look upon the Sun in a tub of water, not daring eye His native splendor) the one was the mirrour of the Law, the second is the works of the Creation, and the third is the Soul of man, which He Himself hath told us is framed after His own glorious Image.

As for the first mirrour, the Law; God knowing that *instinct*, or as we terme it, *a natural conscience*, were compleat digests of all that man was to observe, He did make that mirrour very little, a volumne of only two pages; but that mirrour is, of late, so mullered about, by marginal Notes and Commentars, that the mirrour it self is almost over-spread by them; and it is very observable, that in the holy Registers, the Law is still abridged, but we never see it enlarg'd: For, albeit the fundamental Laws of both Tables were packed up in narrow bounds, yet our Saviour sums

ſums them in theſe two, *fear the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, and, *love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*. And the Apoſtle *Paul*, in his divine Epiſtles, profeſſes, that he deſires to know only Chriſt, and Him crucified: So, that I am confident, that if our Saviour were to preach in perſon, once more to the world; He would enveigh againſt our Caſuiſts, as much as He did againſt the Jewiſh Talmudiſts; for, the one as well as the other, are equally guilty of burdening the ſhoulders of weak chriſtians, with the unneceſſary traſh of humane inventions. For, I remember to have ſeen a late Caſuiſt, diſpute contentiouſly amongſt his other caſes, whither Tobacco, taken in the morning, did break a commanded faſt or not? To which, after a feaveriſh conflict, his wiſdom, forſooth, returns this oraculous anſwer; *That if Tobacco be taken at the noſe, it breaks not the faſt, but if it be taken at the mouth, then it breaks the faſt.* Which, becauſe I

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made a Collasterion betwixt the Casuists and the Talmudists, I shall only mention out of the Talmude (which was the *Jews* comment upon the Law) a case, exactly parallel to this: wherein is decided, that if a man carry a burden on the Sabbath day, upon both his shoulders, then he is guilty of breach of Sabbath, but that he is not guilty if he carry it upon one shoulder. As to my own private judgment, (which I submitt to my spiritual tutors) I think, that seing the conscience of man, is the same faculty with the judgment when conversant about spiritual imployments (as the word συνειδησις which imports a knowledge reflexive upon a man's own self, doth abundantly evidence) that therefore, as there are judgments of different tempers; So there are likewise consciences of different frames: and which vary as much amongst themselves, as natural constitutions do. And therefore, as the same Dose would prove noxious to one con-

conſtitution, wherein another would find his health; So in one and the ſame act, that reſolution may be ſaving to one conſcience, which may condemn another: for, ſeing God hath kindled a torch in each mans breaſt, by whoſe flame he may ſee what path he ſhould beat. In which ſenſe it is ſaid, *Prov.* 20. 27. *That the underſtanding of man is the candle of the Lord*; and can that light miſlead? And ſeing man muſt be anſwerable according to what it preſcrives to him, doubtleſs it is fitter that he ſhould hearken to the reiterated dictates of his conſcience, than to the reſolution of any School-caſuiſt: and that for the ſame reaſon, that it is more rational to obey the Law it ſelf, than the wiſeſt Lawier, who may either be deceived himſelf, or have a deſign to deceive others. For if God hath endued man with every thing neceſſary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtleſs beſtowed upon him an internal

ternal touch-ſtone, by whoſe teſt he may diſcern betwixt good and evil; ſeing to command man to walk uprightly, and not to beſtow on him eyes to ſee the road, were to command a blind man to walk, and to puniſh him if he went aſtray. And as the compoſure of man's body, would be imperfect and manck, if he wanted a palate to diſcern betwixt the taſt of what is wholſome, or what is putrid; So if the ſoul of man were not able to know its own duty, and by the palate of a natural conſcience, to difference betwixt lawfull and unlawfull: certainly the ſoul might be thought to be but ill appointed. Thus, beaſts are by an intrinſick principle taught their duty, and do accordingly ſhun or follow what is convenient for them, without conſulting any thing from without. And ſhall man be leſs perſpicacious, or more defective then theſe? As alſo ſeing man is oftimes by thouſands of occaſions, removed far from the aſſiſtance of Chair or

Pulpit-

Pulpit-informers; and in that his retiredneſs, hath moſt of theſe caſes to be reſolved: it were abſurd to think that he then wants ſufficiency of help for their reſolution. And it is moſt obſervable in Scripture, that men are oft check'd for quenching the Spirit, but never for not conſulting Caſuiſts. I know it may be thought, that when the ſoul of man rages at ſometime in a feaver of luſt, revenge, or ſome ſuch ſin, that then the conſcience may rave; Yet I dare ſay, that albeit the ſoul, out of an inordinat deſire to enjoy its own pleaſures, may ſet its invention a work, to palliat the ſinfulneſs of what it deſires; yet by ſome ſecret knell, the conſcience ſounds ſtill its reprobf. And I dare ſay, that never man erred without a check from his conſcience; nor that ever any few have ſinned, after an approbation obtained from his conſcience of what he was about: and when we aſſent to theſe Doctors, is it not becauſe our conſciences, or our judgments (which

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are the same) assent, to what they inform? which evidences, that our consciences are more to be believed, then they, by that rule; *Propter quod unumquodq; est tale*, &c. but to convince us of the folly of our addresses to these Doctors. It may, and often doth fall out, that that may be a sin in me, which a Casuist pronounces to be none; as if my breast did suggest to me, that it were a sin to buy Church-lands; if thereafter I did buy them, it were doubtless a sin, albeit my Doctors, following the Canons of their particular Church, assured me, that the sale of Church-lands were no sin in it self. I am confident then, that this Casuist-divinity, hath taken its rise from the desire Church-men had to know the mysterie of each man's breast, and to the end, nothing of import, might be undertaken without consulting their Cell; perswading men, that *in ordine ad spiritualia*, their consciences, and consequently their Salvation, may be interested in every civil affair.

affair. And to confirm this, it is most observable, that this trade is most used by *Jesuits* and Innovators, who desire to know all intrigues and subvert all States, whereas the primitive Church knew no such Divinity, neither hath its Doctors left any such Volumes.

It may be urged; that seing the conscience is but a reflex act of the judgment, that as the judgment is an unsure guid, the conscience cannot pretend to be infallible; and that the one, as well as the other, is tutor'd by the fallacious principles of *sense* and *custom*: And I my self have seen my Landslady in *France*, as much troubled in conscience for giving us flesh to eat in Lent, as if she had cast out the flesh of a christian to be devoured by dogs; and so Atheisme may attribute to custom, these inclinations whereby we are acted on to believe a Deity; and may tell us, that the Mahumetans find themselves as much prickt in conscience, for transgressing their

Prophets canons, as we for offending against the moral Law. And thus the adoring of a Deity might have at first been brooded in the council-chamber of a Statesmans head, and yet might have been, at that time by the vulgar, and thereafter by the wisest pates, worshipped with profound respects: Yet, if we pry narrowly into this conceit, we shall find in it something of instinct previous to all forgeries possible. For, what was it (I pray you) which encouraged, or suggested to these Politicians, that such a thing as the Deity might be dissembled to their people for their imposing that cheat, presupposed some pre-existing notion of it? Or, how entred that fancie first in their wild heads? Or, how could so many contemporary, and yet far distant, Legislators, fall upon the same thoughts, especialy, it being so remote from *sense*, and for framing of which *idea*, their experience could never furnish a pattern? Conscience then must be something else than

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the fumes of melancholy, or, capricio's of fancie; for else, roaring Gallants, who are little troubled, or can easily conquer all other fancies, would not be so haunted by these pricking pangs; which if they were not infallibly divine, behooved to be meerly ridiculous, and to want all support from reason or experience.

There is another style of cases of conscience, which is a Cadet of that same family; and these are such cases as were the brood of these late times, which, like Insects and unclean creatures, may be said *generari ex putri materiâ*: an instance whereof, was that famous Sister, who ask'd if she was obliog'd to execute her cast for killing a mouse upon the Sabbath. This was a Theology, taught by old dotting Wives, and studied by State-expectants, who, to gain applause, and in hope to mount Preferment's Sadle, made use of this gilded stirrup. I shall not inveigh against this foppery, fa-

ing it hath not poſſeſt mens conceit ſo long, as to have preſcrived the tittle of Divinity; but, like a meteor, which, becauſe it is fixt to no Orbe, and is but a maſs of inflamed vapours, doth therefore diſappear immediatly, how ſoon its ſubſtance flaſhes out; and its aſhes are now entomb'd in the ſame clay with its brother twain, that pious *Non-ſenſe*, wherein God Almighty was treated with in familiar and not in ſuperiour.

The Scriptures. As God did light the candle of a private conſcience, in each private breaſt; So hath He hung up the lamp of the Scriptures, in the body of His Church; and theſe we may call the conſcience of the Church, whilſt triumphant. Which ſome, by the breath of their vanity, and ſtormes of their paſſion, endeavour to blow out, whilſt others, make no other uſe of its Light, then to ſhew them where to find a jeſt. And within the armes of this diviſion, ly

folded,

folded, all the prophane race of mankind. As to these first (who should be first, because they are Sathan's first-born, and so deserve a double portion of this reproof) they contend, that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low stile; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions. But these miscreants should consider, that much of the Scriptures native splendor is impared by its Translators, who, fearing to fall within the verge of the curse pronounced against such as should pair from, or adde to, any thing contained in that divine Book, were, and are willing, that their Translation should want rather the lustre, then meaning of the Original. As also of all Tongues, I believe the Hebrew admits least of a Translation; especially into northern Languages: for as these Nations differ least in their expressions, who, because of their commerce or con-

ty, have the most frequent occurrence. So doubtless, the *Jews* and we, by this Rule, should in language hold the least correspondence. And because there is no pure fountain of this Tongue left, besides the Bible, it must be hard to understand its expressions, wherein the Translators can find little or no help from the variety and collation of Authors. And seing this Book was penn'd indifferently, for all Ages, Nations and Sexes, it was fit that its stile should have been condescending: for those who are tall, can pull the fruit which hangs low, whereas these who are low, cannot pull what pearch's high. And it is very observable, that where the fruit is greatest and ripest, there the branch whereon it hangs, bowes lowest. When God appeared to *Elijah*, *Kings* 19. there came first a terrible wind, thereafter a great earthquake, and then fire; and yet God was in none of these, but spoke in the thrill small voice. His divine Providence hath so order'd it, that

our

our conviction cannot be ascrib'd to the fund of Eloquence nor slight of Logick, but merely to the truth of what is therein represented: our Saviour, will with clay and spittle, illuminate our eyes, as He did these of the other blind man in the Gospel. And such is the strength of His divine Arme, that He can vanquish Sathan, misbelief and ignorance with any weapon. And as we think the Sun's circumference but little, because it is situated so far above us; So we conclude these truths and excellencies but mean, because they are plac'd above our frail reach, and will blame the Scriptures, when the faule lurks in our selves, that great Physician will cure us, like an artist, with simples, specifick for our disease, and not like a *Charlatan*, with perfumed and gilded nothings. It is not allwayes the best metal, which carries the plesingest *impressa*; nor doth the painted candle cast the clearest light. There are many things in Scripture, which because of our

frailty,

frailty, appear (like a staff in the waters) to be crooked, albeit they be streight. Why *Abraham* should have kill'd his son *Isaac*; or the *Israelites* have borrowed and not restored the *Egyptian* Ear-rings, staggers not my belief: for these belong'd to God, and neither to *Abraham*, nor the *Egyptians*: and so God might have given order to any He pleased to recieve them: and these who obey'd, were no more guilty, then such are, who by order from the Master, recieve what he did formerly lend to others. And as to its repetitions; they differ, no doubt, from one another; albeit we (who think all things removed, though by a little distance from us, of one shape) judge ill, in judging otherwayes. And as an excellent person hath well observed, God hath appointed these reiterated expressions, to be as so many witnesses, to convince Hereticks and others, who should call the meaning of any one place in question, or wrest it by what precedes or followes it.

As

As to these writers, in whom the wine of God's consolations, (by being winded in the cracke vessels of their heads) turns into the tart vinegar of prophane Satyres, I condole their condition: for, that stomach must be very corrupt, wherein the best of aliment putrifies most; and probably, that indigested milk, being converted in excrementitious bile and humours, may cast them in a feaver which shall never cool to all eternity. I pity likewayes these, who, out of an inadvertent (and as they think, sinless) humour, jest with these divine truths; like foolish children, who love rather to sport with their meat then eat it. These, albeit they intend not to prophane Scripture, yet, they vilifie it: And we may say of the Bible as of taking of God's name in our mouths, which must not only, not be done upon design, to blaspheme and diffame Him, but must not be taken but upon necessity, and, like the Shew-bread, must be used only when we are in straits.

strain. I have been too guilty of this last sin my self; and therefore, least I should make no atonement, I have rather resolved to appear before the world, in the dusk and sackcloath of this silly Discourse, a Penance, really, to me very great.

When I consider how various and innumerable are the actions of men, and that in all these, they need particular instructions from above the Pole, I admire why there are so many passages in Scripture, from which our necessity may expect no assistance. And therefore, least I should think, that in Scripture there is any waste of words, I am induced to believe, that there runneth allegory in those holy Books from *Genesis* to *Jude*'s Revelation, and that its mystical sense is that which deserves the name of God's Word. Might we not have admired why the Story of *Hagar* and her bastard is there voluminously described, and what the Church or private Devotion was concerned therein, if *Paul, Gal.* 4. 24. had

had not discovered the mystery to us? By which things, another thing is meant: For, these two mothers are the two Testaments, the one which is *Agar*, of mount *Sinai*, which gendereth into bondage, &c. I might here relate many excellent allusions to prove this, but I shall satisfie my self with one which I did read in one Doctor *Everet*; who, preaching upon *Joshua*, 15. 16. *That* Caleb *said, he who smiteth* Kirjath-sepher *and taketh it, even to him will I give* Achsah *my daughter to wife. And* Othniel *took it*, &c. saith, that *Caleb* signifies a *good heart*, *Kirjath-sepher* the *city of the Letter*, *Achsah* the *Vision*, *Othniel God's opportunity*. And so the mystical sense runs, a good heart saith, that whoever will take in (and smite, as *Moses* did the rock) the Letter of the word, shall have the vision which lurks under it discovered and given to him. And God's own time is the only mean for accomplishing this: As also, it is most

remarkable, that that City which was called *Cirjath-ſepher* before it was taken in, or, *the city of the Letter*, was, after it was conquered, called *Debir*, which ſignifies *an oracle*; ſo that the Word or Letter is no oracle, till it be once, as it were, taken in and overcome. Since the reading of which Sermon, I believe that one may profit more by an hebrew Lexicon, then by a thouſand Engliſh Lectures.

Theſe who detract from Scripture, by attributing the production of miracles, to natural cauſes, do not much diſparage the power of God, but (though againſt their depraved intention) cry rather up his omnipotency: For certainly, if theſe miracles were produced by ſecondary cauſes, then doubtleſs, that productive faculty was beſtowed upon them by the Almighty; and if he can make the creatures produce ſuch ſtrange effects, much more is he able to effectuate them himſelf; as it is more difficult, for a great Maſter, to form

form curious and admirable Characters when he leads a ſchollars hand, then when he writes them with his own; for, ſuch help may be called *reſiſting aſſiſtance*. I cannot likewiſe but blame many of our Preachers, who rather break then open holy Texts; and rather make new meanings, ſuiting with their private deſignes, then tell the meaning of the Spirit. Who would not have laugh'd to hear a Presbyterian obſerve, from the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, firſt verſe, that whilſt *Moſes* relates what God made, he ſpeaks nothing of *Biſhops*; by which it was evident (ſaid *Don Quixot*'s Chaplain) that *Biſhops* were not of divine Inſtitution: a conceit as ridiculous as that of a Prieſt, who hearing *Maria* ſpoken of for to ſignifie *Seas*, did brag that he had found *the Virgine Mary* named in the old Teſtament. Albeit I think preaching no part of divine Worſhip, hearing being no adoration; yet, love I to go to Church, were it but to ſee a multitude

multitude met together, to confute that there is a God: But, when I go to hear I care not whom, knowing that Christ elected Fisher-men to preach down infidelity, when it was in the ruff of it's pride: and that *Paul* (the most signal Trophie of our christian Faith) was sent for confirmation, not to *Peter* or *James* at *Jerusalem*, but to *Ananias*, one of the meanest amongst the Disciples. And seing our Salvation, by preaching, is a miracle; it is still so much the greater by how much weaker the instruments are. When the Pulpit was a mount *Sinai*, from which the Law was thundered, or a mount of *Olives*, whereon our Saviour's glorious transformation was to be seen, then were Sermons to be honoured; but, since it is become a mount *Calvier*, whereon our blessed Saviour suffers daily, by scandalous railings, Sermons are now become unsavoury for the most part. I hate to see that divine place made either a Bar, wherein fowler quarels are, with

with passion, pleaded; or a Stage, whereon revenge is, by Surprez, satisfied; or, a School-chair, from which un-intelligible questions are mysteriously debated; but amongst all these innovations, introduced by our infant Divines, I hate none more then that of giving reasons for proving *the Doctrine*, which being Scripture it self, can be proven by nothing that is more certain. As for instance, when the Doctrine is, *that God loved us freely*, how can this be proven more convincingly then thus, *my Text sayes it*; and that is *idem per idem*, a most unlogical kind of probation. When I then go to Church, I should love to spend my time in praises and prayers; which as they are the only parts of adoration, so are they the natural imployments of the Church, either Militant or Triumphant: Yet, it displeases me to hear our young Pulpitiers shriek and cry, like *Baal*'s Priests, as if God were no nearer them then the visible Heavens.

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The moral Law. It honours much our employment, that God Almighty was the first and great Law-giver; and that our blessed Saviour stiles himself our Advocat. And it is an amazing wonder that we are tyed only by ten Laws; whereof seven were enacted doubtless for our advantage and respect, more immediatly the security of the creature then the honour of the Creator, and are such restraints as men behoved to have laid upon one another, and which nature layes upon us all. And albeit I laugh at the jewish Cabala, which sayes, that the moral Law was written, two thousand years before *Moses*, in black letters, at the back of a clear burning fire: Yet, can I not approve *Tertullian*'s wit, who endeavours to find all these ten in the prohibition made to *Adam*. There are indeed some sins which scarce a consequence can bring within the verge of these Commandments. As for instance, Drunkenness: Yet, these are such as are so destructive to our nature,

ture, that there needs no Law be made against them. So that the Priest hit wittily, to whom that sin being confess'd, enjoyned as an Penance, their being drunk a second time; which makes me conclude, that if Drunkenness were to be ranged under any of these Laws, it would fal most naturally under that, *Thou shalt not kill.* Albeit the fourth Commandment seems to respect only the honour of God, and that the creature seems to be no wayes bettered by it: Yet, our more serious observation will discover, that all be-labouring creatures, as it were, expect an ease the seventh day more then any other. Whether it be, that nature is by custom framed to that expectation, I cannot tell: But, we see that God chose'd that number to be the year of jubile amongst his own people, and that it is the period of all the several consistencies in our life, infancie, pubertie, &c. And for this reason Physicians observe, that the child born in the se-

venth moneth is stronger then that which is born in the eight; because in the seventh it is come to a knot, by passing whereof, in the eight it is in a state of imperfection: But, what the mystery of this holy Climatrick is, I refer till we come to that Sabbath of rest, whereat we ordinarly arrive, after seven times nine years hath showed upon us.

We may think, that if God had intended, that one and the same day of the week should have been appropriated to have been a Sabbath, He had designed each day by a special terme, and had commanded, that a day of such a designation, should have been sequestrated for a Sabbath; and that by designing only the seventh day he did leave a liberty to employ any day of the seven for that use. Yet, it is remarkable, that *Moses* nor the Jewish Church durst not attempt the change of their new-years day; but that the Almighty was pleased to bestow a peculiar sanction upon that alteration.

For

For, *Exod.* 12. 2. He commands, that the moneth wherein the Israelites came from *Egypt*, should be, by them, reputed the first moneth of their year. Wherefore, seing each Nation chalks out a divers Sabbath, it would appear that there is something of humour in it as well as of Religion. The *venerious* Mahumetan chooseth Friday, or, *dies Veneris*; The *dull Jew* dull *Saturn's day*; The *warlick* Parthians Tuesday, or, *Mars-day*; The *showy* Europeans *Sunday*. And albeit the Christians are influenc'd only by inspiration; yet, I am confident, that the heathens did follow that for Religion, which suited best with their natural temper. But this is a meditation which should travel no where beyond a mans private breast, lest it meet with enmity and beget scandal.

It would puzle a heathen much to hear, that he who breaks one of these Laws, is guilty of the breach of all: But, it troubles not me, seing all these Laws are made to shew

our obedience, and the breach of any one of them shewes our contempt of Him who is the author of all. And it may be this was typified in *Moses*'s breaking both Tables with one passionat fling, after he came down from the Mount: For, if this breaking of them had not been pre-design'd for some hid end, doubtless he had been reproved for his negligence. However, we may from this learn the desperate nature of passion, which made *Moses*, who was the meekest man upon earth, break all the Laws of God in one act. It might be also argued, that seing all the Laws of the second Table were enacted for, and respect ultimatly, the advantage of man, that where man is not wronged, there the Law cannot be broke. And thus, if a married man should have liberty from his wife to take another woman, this could be no more reputed adultery, then it could be reputed theft to take what belongs to our neighbour, himself consenting: and

that for this cause, *Jacob*'s begetting children with his wifes maids, is not in Scripture reproved as adultery, because they were given to him by her self for that effect: but, seing the practice of all the world condemns this conclusion, far be it from me to press it further. *vide Errata*

* see the errata for some words [illegible]

* *The judicial Law.*

Albeit the judicial Law (which may be justly called the judicious Law) is commonly reputed to be but the municipal Law of the Jews; yet, seing it was thundered from mount *Sinai* with so much pomp, and is ingrost in the Books of holy Truth, and seems nearlier related to reason then any other Law, I admire why it should not be religiously observed by all Nations: especially seing, as it is, the exactest picture of Justice that ever was drawn, so it hath this of a picture in it, that it seems to look directly upon all who behold it, albeit they be placed (amongst themselves) in directly opposite, situations and stances. Thus

* see the errata for several lines to come in here

this Law suits even with contrary tempers, and the unequal complexions of all Nations. I know that the ceremonial Law is likewayes inserted amongst the other holy Canons, and yet binds not us who live under the jurisdiction of the Gospel: But the reason of this seems to be, because these did immediatly concern the Jewish Church, and were conversant about these holy things. And so, seing the old Testament is a description of their Hierarchy, and of God's way of working in these times, I wonder not to see these ceremonies amidst other sacred truths, and yet not observed, seing they are expresly abrogat. But, if the judicial Law, which respected not the Hierarchy of that Church, was obligatour only whilst the Jewish State was in being, I admire why the Spirit of God took so much pains, first to penn it, and then to deliver it so Canon-like to posterity. And since it is a principle in Law and reason, that Laws must still stand in vi-

got till they be expresly abrogat, and must not be derogated from by consequences or presumptions, I admire why this Law, which God hath enervat by no express Text, should be now look'd upon as Statutes nowise *a-la-mode*. It is true, that our Saviour, when the woman, convicted of adultery, was brought to Him, did not, according to that Law, pronounce the sentence of death against her; whence some think, that Church-men, following their Masters example, should not give their suffrage in criminal cases, and have only δικην αναιμακτην, a bloodless Jurisdiction; for, they are appointed to be Nurses, not Chyrurgions. But, it is as true, that our Saviour professed in all the tract of His life, that He came not to be a Judge in things temporal, and His design in that place was only to convince them of their own sinnes, and not to absolve her, not to abrogat the Law: and therefore He desired him who was freest from sin, to cast the

the first stone at her. And whereas it is conjectured, that these words which our Saviour stoop'd down to write in the clay, immediatly thereafter was an abrogation of that Law; this is a Geomancy more wilde then any lesson which is alledged to have been read in the mysterious face of Heaven, and should never be taught but in a Rabbies cabalistick Gown. And whereas it is alledged, that there are many precepts in that *corpus Juris*, which respects only the humor of the Jews, I admire why that can be urged; for certainly, theft, murder, and these other crimes punished there, are the same crimes which reigns amongst us; and so why not punishable after that same manner? Neither are the humors of these Jews more different from ours, then was the *genius* of the Romans; and yet, few or no Nations refuse to cast their modern Laws in that antique mould. And it is very probable, that as God did, in the moral Law, teach man

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how to be just in his own actions, so He would likewayes instruct him by a judicial Law, how to administrate Justice to others.

What can perpetuate a Law more then that the Authority whereby it is enacted should be obligatory in all ages, and the reason whereon it is founded should be eternal? and in what Laws do these two qualities appear more, or so much, as in the judicial Laws of the Jews, where the eternal Law-giver was Legislator, and the occasion, productive of them, seemed rational (and necessar) to His infallible omniscience? and if in any of these statutes, our purblind judgments cannot see a present conveniency, we should rather impute that to our own simplicity, then charge it as a guilt upon His divine Statutes; and are there not many municipal Laws in each Country, which have no hedge about them to keep them untrampled upon by wanton and too curious wits? But, that excellent Maxime, *Omnium*

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quæ fuerunt Majores nostri, non est reddenda ratio, neque certa sunt, si incerta redderentur; a reason must not be rendred for all that our Ancestors have enacted, lest what is now certain, become then uncertain. Albeit a Law enacted only by humane Authority, seem unreasonable or inconvenient; yet, it retains its vigor till it be abrogat by the same, or a higher Authority, then that whereby it was first statuted; and the Law sayes, that *nihil est tam naturale quam unumquodque eodem modo dissolvi quo colligatum est*. And, seing the moral and judicial Laws are twisted so together, and are oft incorporated in one statute, as *Levit.* 20. 10. *Deut.* 22. 22. where adultery is forbidden, and the adulterer is to die the death: how can we think the one half of this Law obligatory for ever, and yet neglect it's other half, wherein the punishment is specified, and which appears to have been the scope of the divine Law-giver? For, the world

needed

needed not so much to have been acquainted, that adultery was a sin, as that that sin deserved death; and if we allow our capricious humor the liberty to reject what we think inconvenient, we may at last arrive at that pitch of licentiousness, as to abrogat, by our practice, whatever choaks our present humor.

There are many things much mistaken in that Law, which makes the dissonancy betwixt it and our Law, appear so much the greater. As for instance, it is concluded, that by that Law, no theft was punishable by death; whereof this is given as a reason, because there is no proportion betwixt goods and life; and that all that a man hath he will give for his life, whereas this argument would prove, that no guilt but murder should be punished with death; and so this dart rather flees over then hits the mark at which it is level'd. And if this argument concluded, why should adultery have been punished with death by that

Law,

Law, seing there seems no proportion betwixt that guilt and death? For, if *vitæ & famæ* be in Law *æquiparati*, by that same Law, *pecuniæ & alteri sanguis*. But, if there be no proportion betwixt goods and life, and if the punishment of theft, when it is aggrag'd to it's greatest height, cannot, in their opinion, reach so far as to be capital. Why was it, that by that Law nocturnal theevs might have been killed by those who found them? *Exod.* 22. 2. For, it appears against reason, that more should be permitted to a private and passionat party, then to a dis-interested Judge. And it is clear by 2 *Sam.* 12. 5 that theft was in some cases capital: For, there *David* vows, that he who took his neighbours one sheep, and spared his own many, should surely die; which being spoke by a just King to an excellent Prophet, and not reproved, must not be thought a flash of passion, but a well-founded sentence. Were not likewayes two theevs crucified by

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tho Jews at the same time with our ever glorious Saviour? which must not be thought to merit execution, seing the Law of the Romans allowed no such punishment for theft. I judge therefore, the reason why murder and adultery were punished with death, rather then all theft, to have been, because theft may be repaired by restitution, but murder and adultery cannot. And albeit the judicial Law commands restitution only in the theft of an ox or sheep, (things of small moment, and which may be stollen to satisfie rather hunger then lust) yet, I see no limits set to Judges, commanding them not to inflict a capital punishment in extraordinary cases. For certainly, he who steals, may for ought he himself knows, be about the committing of murder, seing to steal what should aliment any poor one, is in effect, the same thing as to murder him. It is much controverted, if this Law prohibits self-murder, and I think it doth: For, we are commanded to

love

love our neighbour as our self; and so, since we are commanded not to kill our neighbour, that same Law must likewayes forbid our killing of our selves. But the reason probably, why no express Text did forbid that sin, was, because the Spirit of God knew that the natural aversion we have against death, would, in this do more then supply a Law; and that these who would be so desperat as to neglect the one, would never be so pious as to obey the other. Or else, God hath been unwilling, by making such a Law, to intimate to the world, that such a sin might be committed. Yet, it seems strange, that many are in Scripture related, as *Saul* and others, to have killed themselves, against whom no check stands registrated in holy Records. But, I stop here, intending to bestow a whole Tractat upon the Judicial Law, a task hitherto too much neglected.

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The second mirrour, wherein God Almighty is to be seen, is that of His creatures; and in that a *Virtuoso* may contemplate His infinite power, as in the other he may see His admirable justice. It is very observable, that when God, or His Prophets, would prove His greatness, the Sun, Orion and the Leviathan, are made use of as arguments. And when the Spirit of God describes the inimitable knowledge of *Solomon*, bestowed upon him by God, as an extraordinary mark of His favour, he sayes not, that he understood the quirks of philosophy, or notions of Divinity; but it is said, that he knew all from the Cedar of *Lebanon* to the Hyssope that grows upon the wall. And in earnest, it is strange, that when man comes into the gallery of this World, he should take such pleasure in gazing upon these ill drawn fictions, which have only past the pencil of humane wit, and should not fix his admiration upon these glorious

rious creatures, which are the works of that great Master; to framing whereof, God is content to be said to have spent six dayes, to the end, that man might admire the effects of so much paine, whereas His omnipotency might, with one fiat, have summoned them all to appear, apparell'd in these gorgeous dresses which now adorne them. And it is as strange, that man, having that huge volumn of the Creation to revolve, wherein is such an infinit number of curious tale-duces, to feast his eyes with curiosity, and to furnish his soul with solid knowledge; he should notwithstanding spend so much oyl and sweat, in spinning out *entrationis, materia prima, potentia obedientialis*, and such like unintelligible trash, which, like cob-webs, are but envenomed dust curiously wrought. And because the grosse of mankind was so grosse, as not to understand God's greatnesse by the abstract *idea's* which instinct presented to him; Therefore, to teach

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that sensual trond, by the trunchmantic of sense He hath bestowed upon them this mirrour; wherein they may see how infinit He is in power, who made *Nothing* so fruitfull, as to bud forth in this glorious crop of creatures, which now inhabits the surface of heaven and earth.

I admire that such Philosophers as have had their faces wash'd at the font, can allow of Monsters, and define them to be the preter-intentional works of nature, wherein nature miss'd of her design, and was not able to effectuat what she intended: For, if *nature* and *providence* signifie the same thing in the Dictionary of christianity, it were blasphemy to think, that *providence* could not be able to effectuat what it once designed. All the creatures are indeed but as clay in the hand of this great Potter; but, it were impious to think, that His art can be mistaken in framing any Vessel: wherefore, I am apter to believe, that *Monsters.*

all these creatures which the Schools term *Monsters*, are rather the intentions, then errors of *nature*; and that as *nature* doth nothing without design, so it doth nothing without success. And thus I rather admire nature in these, for her cunning variety, then upbraid her with insufficiency and weakness. Neither term I an Hermophrodite, man or woman, according to the prevalency of that Sex which predomines in it, no more then I think that the Painter, when he hath delineated curiously an exact Mermaid, resolves to draw either a woman or fish, and not one distinct creature, pert'd up of both. And doubtless this error did at first proceed from mans vanity, who concluded, that every frame which answered not that idea, which resides in him, was the effect of *chance*, and not of *nature*; as if *nature* had been obliged to leave in the bibliothek of his head, the Original of all such Pieces as was to pass its press.

Seing

Seing God, in His survey of the Creation, called all that He had made *good*, because they were usefull, I conclude, that these are the best which are the most usefull. And albeit I condemn prodigality of ignorance, in preferring a diamond to a capon or sheep; yet, do I not condemn such of vanity, as shine with these sparkling creatures: For, since God made *nothing*, which He did not destinat for some use, and seing most of these serve for no use else, doubtless, the wearing of them is most allowable. Yet, can I not allow of these gaudy compounds, which men creat to themselves, as if something had been still wanting after the Creation was finished; wherein man could supply God, and art, nature. The bestowing a hundred pounds upon a Tulip, or a thousand on a Picture, are not to me the meer rants of luxury; but are courses pre-ordained by the Almighty, for returning to poor Artisans, that money, which oppression did at first

most injustly screw from their weary hands. It is our ignorance of nature's mysteries which perswads us, that some, if not most of the creatures, serve rather for beautifying the universe, then for supplying necessity, an error which experience daily confutes: So, these herbs which of old cloathed only the uninhabited mountains, do now deserve their own place in Apothecaries shops. And it is most observable, that the Scurvy growes no where but where the disease rages, which is cured by it: Seing God loved variety in the Creation, He cannot hate curiosity in man, these two being correspondents; and the one without the other would be but as flowers to the blind, or musick to the deaf. I laugh at the fruitless pilgrimages of such as travel to *Joppa* or *China*, to satisfie their curiosity; there being a *Tredaskins* closet in each Tulip, and a *Solomon's* Court in each Lilly of the field. And seing mens tempers are so various,

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it was no wonder that the creatures (which were made for his use) should have been made proportional to his humor: But, seing art hath in many things copied nature to the life, I think not the Symetrie nor variety to be seen amongst the creatures such an infallible argument for proving the being of a God. As is *instinct*, which all the art of men and Angels cannot counterfit; and herein is it, that that grand Magician must acknowledge the finger of his Maker, seing here his own art fails.

These who expect equal excellency in all the parts of this curious Fabrick, do not understand wherein its Symetrie consists. All the strings of an Instrument sound not equally high, and yet they make up the harmony: the face of the earth looks in some places deform'd and parcht; and yet it is there the mother of rich mines (as if God intended to bestow a great portion where He bestowes an ill face) and what we think deformities, were placed

there as panther, and are as much blemishes, then the spots are to the Leopards.

I confess, that at first it puzl'd much my enquiry, for what end these mountains were made so near neighbours to the devided clouds: and I once imagin'd, that these were rather the effects of the flood, then creatures as first intended; and were but the rubbish and mud which these impetuous waters had heap'd up in a mass: But, I was thereafter disswaded from this conjecture, by the 8. Chap. *Prov.* where wisdom, proving it's antiquity, sayes, that it was with God before the heavens were prepared, and the mountains setled; by the scope of which Text, it is clear, that the heavens, hills, and the rest of the Creation, are said to bear one date. It is then more probable, that God foreseeing that the lust of conquest would, like the needle of the Compass, look still north; as is evident by comparing all the Monarchies (first the Assyrian,

(albeit since, ambition hath found a way to climb over them) as if He told them, that they should march no further. Thus, it is very observable, that the northern parts of one Kingdom are alwayes more barren then the southern limits of the Country which lyes to the north of it. The north of *England* more mountainous and barren then the south of *Scotland*, albeit it ly nearer the Sun; the south of *England* more pleasant and fertile then the north of *France*; and the south of *France* then the north of *Italy*, &c.

We must likewayes consider, that nature bruised it's face so when it fell in Adam, that it did then contract many of these blemishes which now deform it; and that as it waxes old, it's native beauty is the more deformed by furrowed wrinkles. We cannot judge what it was in health, by it's present distem-

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perd condition, wherein it groans and travelleth in pain, as the Apostle tells us. And the differences betwixt these two states may be known from this, that God, when He compleated the Creation, saw that all was good; whereas *Solomon*, having reviewed it in his time, saw all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

Man the third mirrour.

The third mirrour, wherein God is to be admired, is *man*. This is that noble creature which God was pleased to mould last of all others, not willing to bring him home, till, by the preceeding Creations, He had plenished his house abundantly for him. And albeit in the creation of all other creatures, it is only said, that God spoke, and it was: Yet, when man was to be framed, the cabinet Council of heaven was call'd, and it is said (*let us*) as if more art had been to be shewed here, then in all the remanent Fabrick of the terraqueous Glob, and glorious Circles of heaven. It is likewise very

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observable, that albeit all the fishes of the sea were formed by one word, all the beasts of the field by one act, &c. Yet, God was pleased to bestow two upon the creation of *man*; by the first, his body was created out of the dust, and thereafter, was breathed in, his soul. And albeit transient mention is only made of all other Creations; yet, the history of mans Creation is twice repeated, once, *Gen.* 1. 27. and again, 2. 7. And, least that foreseen deformity, wherewith he was to be besmear'd after his fall, should make it be questioned, that at his first creation he had received the *impressa* of God's Image, this is oft repeated; For, in the 26. *ver. Gen.* 1. it is said, *Let us make man in our image*; and then again, *and after our likeness*. And in the 27. *verse*, *So God created man in his own image*; and again immediately thereafter, *in the image of God created he him*. Yet, I am confident, that this image is so bedabled in the mire of sin, and so

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obscured by it's first fall, and that divine impresse, and print, so worn out, by our old and vicious habits, that, if this genealogy had not been so oft inculcat, we could not but have called it in question, albeit our vanity be ready enough to believe a descent so royal and sublime. Wherefore I must again admire the folly of Atheists, who, by denying a Deity, cloud their own noble birth-right.

But, albeit man be made after God's image, yet, that can be no argument to conclude, that therefore God may be made after man's image, or represented under his figure, as the Anthropomorphits foolishly contend, no more, then if we should conclude, that because a Copy may be taken off an Original, therefore an Original may be taken off a Copy. Neither is this representation salv'd from being idolatry, by alleaging, that the image is not worshiped, but God, who is represented by it: For, it hath been well observed by an ancient Father, that idolatry in

Scripture

Scripture is called adultery. And it is no good excuse for an adulteress, that she did ly with another because she represented her husband to her, and resembled him as a Copy doth it's Original: Yet, seing nothing is room'd in our judgment and apprehension, but what first entred by the wicket of sense, it is almost impossible for man to conceive the *idea* of any thing but vested with some shape, as each man's private reflections will abundantly convince him.

As the boundless Ocean keeps and shews it's well drawn images, whilst it stands quiet, with a face polisht like a christal cake, but losses them immediately, how soon it's proud waves begin to swell and in rage, to spit it's froathy foam in the face of the angry heavens; so, whilst a stoical indolency and christian repose smooths our restless spirits, it is only then, that the soul of man can be said to retain that glorious image of God Almighty, with which it

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was impressed at it's created nativity. But, when the waves of choler begin to roar, or the winds of vanity to blow, then that glorious image is no more to be discerned in him, then the shadows and representations of in-looking objects are to be seen and discerned in the disquieted bosom of the troubled waters.

The immortality of the soul.

The stings of a natural conscience, which, according to each mans actings, creats to him either agues of fear, or paradises of joy, do by their ominating presages, convince us of the immortality of the soul: and seing we see its predictions, both in dreams, in damps of melancholy, and such like enthusiastick fits, followed by suteable events; why may we not likewayes believe its predictions, as to its own immortality, it being the prudence of a *Virtuoso* to lay hold of every mean, which may allay the rage of his hereditary misfortunes? And to what end would

the soul of man receive such impressions of fear and hope, if, by its mortality, it were not to be stated in a condition, wherein its fears and hopes were to have suteable rewards or punishments? Moreover, seing God is just, He will punish and reward: and therefore, seing He punishes and rewards not men according to their merits, or demerits here, there must be doubtless a future state wherein that is to be expected. But, that which convinces my private judgment most of this truth, is, that the noblest Souls, and the sharpest sighted, do, of all others, most desire the state of separation, and have the weakest attaches to this life; which must doubtless proceed from an assurance of immortality, and that it hath, from the *Pisgah* of its contemplation, got a view of the spiritual *Canaan*: For, seing the brutishest of creatures abhors annihilation, as the most averseable ill in nature, doubtless the soul of man, which is the most divine of all creatures,

tures, would never appear this separation, if by it it were to be extinct, and to be no more. And how absurd were it to believe, that man's soul should be made after God's image, and yet conclude it mortal, a quality repugnant to any thing that is divine? As also, how can the soul be thought to perish with the body, seing these accidents which destroy the body cannot reach it? how can the heat of a feaver burn, or rheums drown, that which is not corporeal and cannot be touched? And, seing man's least peccadillo against God Almighty, is against one who is infinite, were it not absurd to think, that it could be proportionally punished in the swift glass of man's short life? then which, nothing is more finit, or sooner finished.

As the soul is God's Image, So it's products are the images of His admirable operations. Do not Mathematicians create eagles, doves, and such like automata's? And seing

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not flowers from the Chimists glasses? And thus art, which is man's offspring, doth ape nature, which is the workmanship of the Almighty: and therefore, seing the soul can with one thought grasp both the Poles, can dart out it's conceits as far as the furdest borders of the imaginary spaces, creat worlds, and order, and disorder, all that is in this which is already created; it's strange to think it to be either corporeal or mortal: For, if it were corporeal and a mass of blood, it's actings would be lent and dull, neither could it's motions be so nimble and winged, as are these of our agile spirits. It were impossible for our narrow heads, to inn all these innumerable *idea's* (which are now in them.) If these were all corporeal, and if these be not corporeal, that which produces them most be doubtless incorporeal, seing *simile generatur à simili*; and dull flesh and blood could never produce such spiritual emanations.

As the soul is God's Image, so in this it resembles Him very much, that we can know nothing of it's nature without it's own assistance; like a dark lanthorn, or a spy, it discovers every thing to us, except it self. And because it refuses us the light of it's candle, whilst we are in the quest of it's mysteries; therefore it is, that our re-searches of it's nature are gropeings in the dark; and so oftimes vain, if not ridiculous. *Avicenna*, *Averroes*, and the remanent of that Arabian tribe, admiring it's prodigious effects, did attribute our spiritual motions to assisting Angels; as if such admirable notions could not be fathered upon less sublime causes; which *Cardan* likewayes thinks, do offer their assistance and light to sensitive creatures, but that the churlishness of their mater will not suffer them to entertain such pure irradiations. This disparages so much humanity, making man only a statue, that it were against the soul's interest to

admit of any such idea's: For, as it tends more to the Artists praise to cause his products move from hid and internall springs, then from extrinsick causes; as we see in Watches and such like. So it is more for the honour of that great Artist, and more suteable to the being and nature of His creatures, that all it's operations flow from it self, then from assisting but exterieur co-adjutors: which makes me averse from *Aristotle's* opinion of the motion of the spheres by intelligences. And it were absurd to think, that men should be blamed or praised for those effects which their assessour Angels could only be charged with. The *Platonicks* alleaged, that all souls existed before their incarceration in bodies; in which state of pre-existence, they were doted with all these spiritual endowments, which shall attend them in the state of separation: and that at their first alliance with bodies, their native knowledge, was clouded,

ἐπιστήμης ἀναβολὴ, with the putting off knowledge for a time, till, by a *reminiscentia*, their intellectuals revived; as by a resurrection. And *Origen* added, that these souls were, according to their escapes, committed in the state of their primitive separation, yoaked with better or worse bodies; a shift taken, in all probability, by him, to evite the apprehension of God's being injust, for infusing innocent souls, in bodies which would infect them; and by drawing them in inevitable snares, at last condemn them, or at least their infusion was the imprisoning these who were not guilty; a difficulty which straits much, such as maintain that the soul is not *ex tradaci*. What the hazard of this opinion may be, my twilight is not able to discover.

It may be, that the *Stoicks* mistake in making the souls of men to be but parcels, decerpt from that universal *anima mundi* (by which they

they doubtless meant God Himself) was occasioned by a mistake of that Text, that *God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life*: concluding, that as the breath is a part of the body which breathed it, So the soul behoved to be a part of that divine essence, from which, by a second consequence, they concluded, that the soul, being a part of that divine being, could not suffer, nor undergo any torments; as is asserted by *Seneca*, *epist.* 29. *Cicero*, *tusc.* 5. and defended by their successors, these primitive hereticks, the *Gnostics*, *Manichees* and *Priscillianists*. But this bastard is not worth the fostering, being an opinion that God hath parts, and man real divinity, and is doubtless a false and flattering testimony given by the soul to it self: For, seing the soul is, by divine Oracles, told us to be made after God's Image, it can be no more called a part of God, then the picture should be reputed a part of the Painter.

Aristotle (like the devil, who because he knows not what to answer, answers ever in engines) tells us, that *anima* is ἀτελέχεια, a terme fitted to exercise the empty braine of curious Pedants, and apter to beget, then explicat difficulties. Neither believe I, that his three souls, which he lodges in man, to wit, the rational, sensitive and vegetative, do differ more amongst themselves, then the will, understanding and fancy differ from the two last; So that his arithmetick might have bestowed five souls upon man, as well as three: But, seing he and many of his disciples believe these to be three, and yet these three to be but one; I admire why they should be so nice, as not to believe that pious mystery of the holy Trinity: whereof in my opinion, his trinity of the soul is a apposite emblem, as was the conceit of a simple Clown, who being asked, how he could apprehend the three glorious persons to be but one? did fold his garment in three plies, and

thereafter drew out all the three in one.

As the heraldrie of our reason cannot blazon the souls *impress*; So can it not help us to line out it's descent: and such would appear to be the excellency of that noble creature, that heaven and earth seem to contend, the which shall be the place of it's nativity. Divines (who are obliged to contend for heaven, because they are it's more immediat Pensioners) will have it to be created and infused: whereas Philosophers (ambitious to have so noble a compatriot, and willing to gratifie nature, which aliments their sublime meditations) contend, that it is *ex traduce*, and is in generation, the bodies other twinne. And albeit it would appear from Scripture, that God accomplish'd the Creation the first seven dayes, and that nature did then part child-bearing: Yet that, in my judgment, must be meant of the Creation of whole *species*, and not of *individuals*, and to press the souls

not traduction; I shall lend only one argument, not because it is the best, but because it is my own. We see, that there where the soul is confess'd to be *ex traduce*, as in bruits and vegetative creatures, that nature, as it were, with a pencil, copies the young from off the old. The young Lyons are still as rapacious and roaring as were their Syers, from whose loyns they descended: and the Rose being pous'd up by the salt nitre which makes it vegetative, spreads the same leaves, and appears with the same blushes or paleness that beautified it's eye-pleasing predecessors. The reason of which continual assimulation, proceeds from the seeds, having in it's bosome, all those qualities and shapes, which appear thereafter in it's larger products, whereof they were but a *mappe* or *index*. Whereas man resembles never, at least not oft, those who are called his parents; the vitious and tall father, having oft low, but vertuous children; which shows, that

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the soul of man is not derived by generation, and that the soul bestowed upon the son's body, is most different and allymbolick to that which lodged in the father. And this may be further confirmed by that excellent passage, *Prov.* 20. 27. where it is said, that *the understanding of man is the candle of the Lord.* Our soul is God's Image, and none can draw that Image but Himself; we are the stamp of His divine nature, and so can only be formed by Himself, who is the glorious Seal.

From this divine principle, that man's soul is made after God's Image, I am almost induced to believe, that *prophesie* is no miraculous gift bestowed upon the soul at extraordinary occasions only, but is a natural (though the highest) perfection of our humane nature: For, if it be natural for the stamp, to have impress'd upon it all the traits that dwell upon the face of the Seal, then it must be natural to the soul, which is God's *impressa*, to have a faculty

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of foreseeing, since that is one of God's excellencies. Albeit I confess, that that Stamp is here infinitely be-dimm'd and worn off; as also, we know by experience, that men upon death-bed, when the soul begins (being detached by sickness from the bodies slavery) to act like it self, do foresee and foretell many remote and improbable events: and for the same reason do I think predictions, by dreams, not to be extraordinary revelations, but rather the products natural of a rational soul. And if fagacious men can be so sharp-sighted in this state of glimmering, as to foresee many events which fall out, why may we not say, that man, if he were rehabilitat in the former state of pure nature, might, without any extraordinary assistance, foresee and prophesie? For, there is not such a distance betwixt that foresight and prophesie, as is betwixt the two states of innocency and corruption, according to the received notion, which men have settled to them-

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selves of that primitive state of innocency.

From the same principle, may it likewayes be deduced, that natural reason cannot but be an excellent mean, for knowing, as far as is possible, the glorious nature of God Almighty: He hath doubtless lighted this candle, that we might, by it, see Himself; and how can we better know the Seal, then by looking upon it's impression. And if Religion and it's mysteries, cannot be comprehended by reason, I confess it is a pretty jest, to hear such frequent reasonings amongst Churchmen, in matters of Religion. And albeit *faith* and *reason* be look'd upon as *Jacob* and *Esau*, whereof the younger only hath the blessings, and are, by Divines, placed at the two opposit points of the Diameter; yet, upon an unbyassed inquiry, it will appear, that *faith* is but sublimated reason, calcin'd by that divine chymical fire of Baptisme; and that the soul of man hath lurking in it, all

all these vertues and faculties which we call Theological; such as *faith*, *hope* and *repentance*: for else *David* would not have prayed, *Enlighten, Lord, my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy Law*; but rather, *Lord bestow new eyes upon me*. Neither could the opening of *Lidea's* heart, have been sufficient for her conversion, if these pre-existing qualities had not been treasur'd up there formerly: So that it would appear, that these holy flames lurk under the ashes of corrupcion, untill God, by the breath of His Spirit (and that wind which bloweth where it listeth) sweep them off: And that God, having once made man perfect in the first Creation, doth not in His regeneration super-add any new faculty (for else the soul had not at first been perfect) but only removes all obstructing impediments.

Faith and reason I am alwayes ashamed, when I hear reason call'd the step-mother of faith, and proclaimed rebel against God

God Almighty, and such declared traitors, as dare harbour it, or appear in it's defence. These are such fools as they who break their Prospects, because they bring not home to their sight the remotest objects; and are as injust as *Jacob* had been, if he had divorc'd from *Leah*, because she was tender-eyed: whereas, we should not put out the eyes of our understanding, but should beg from God the eye-salve of His Spirit for their illumination. Nor should we dash the Prospect of our reason, against the rockie walls of dispair; but should rather wash it's glasses with the tears of unfeigned repentance.

Ever since *faith* and *reason* have been, by Divines, set by the ears, the brutish multitude conclude, these who are most reasonable to be least religious; and the greatest spirits to be least spiritual: a conceit most inconsistent with that divine parable, wherein these who received the many talents improved them to the best advantage, whilst he who had

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but one, laid it up in a napkin. And it is most improbable, that God would choose low shrubs, and not tall Cedars; for the building of His glorious Temple. And it is no mistake, that God, in the old Law, refused to accept the first born of an Ass in sacrifice, but not of any other creature. And some, who were content to be called *Atheists*, providing they were thought Wits, did take advantage in this of the *Rabble's* ignorance, and authorized by their devilish invention, what was at first but a mistake: and this unriddles to us that mystery, why the greatest Wits are most frequently the greatest Atheists.

When I consider, how the Angels, who have no bodies, sinn'd before man; and that brutes, who are all body, sin not at all, but follow the pure dictates of nature. I am induced to believe, that the body is rather unjustly blamed for being, then that really it is, the occasion of sin; and probably, the witty soul hath in this

this, cunningly laid over upon it's fellow, that wherewith it self is only to be charged. What influence can flesh or blood have upon that which is immaterial, no more sure then the safe hath upon the Watch, or the heavens upon it's burgessing Angels? And see we not, that when the soul hath bid the body adieu, it remains a carcasse, fit nor able for nothing. I believe, that the body being a clog to it, may slow it's pursute after spiritual objects, and that it may occasion, indirectly, some sins of omission: For, we see palpably, that eating and drinking dulls our devotions; but, I can never understand, how such dumb Orators, as flesh and blood, can perswade the soul to commit the least sin. And thus, albeit our Saviour sayes, that *flesh and blood did not teach* Peter *to give him his true Epithets*; neither indeed could it: Yet, our Saviour imputes not any actual sin to these pithless causes. And seing our first sin hath occasioned all our after

after sinning, certainly, that which occasioned our first sin was the main source of sinning, and this was doubtless the soul; for, our first sin being an immoderat desire of knowledge, was the effect and product of our spirit, because it was a spiritual sin: whereas if it had been gluttony, lust or such like, which seems corporeal, the body had been more to have been blamed for it. And in this contest, I am of opinion, that the soul wins the cause, because it is the best Orator.

The fall of Angels.

What was the occasion of the first ill, is much debated (and most deservedly) amongst Moralists; for, that which was good could not produce that which was evil, seing that which works mischief cannot be called good. Nor can we ascribe the efficiency of the first evil to evil; for, then the question recurres, what was the cause of that evil? And by this, the supposition is likewise destroyed, whereby the evil enquired after,

after, is supposed to be the first evil: but, if we enquire, what could produce in the Angels that first sin, whereby they forfeited their glory? we will find this disquisition most mysterious. And it is commonly believ'd, but by what revelation I know not, that their pride caus'd their fall; and that they catcht their bruise in climbing, in desiring to be equal to their Creator, they are become inferior to all their fellow creatures. Yet, this seems to me most strange, that these excellent spirits whose very substance was light, and who surpassed far, man, in capacity and understanding, should have so err'd as to imagine, that equality faisable, a fancy which the fondest of men could not have entertained. And it were improbable to say, that their error could have sprouted at first from their understanding; and to think it to have been so grosse, as that fallen man doth now admire it: but, why may we not rather think, that their first error was rather a

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crookedneſs in their will, then a blindneſs in their judgment; and that they fretted to ſee man, whom they knew to be inferiour to themſelves by many ſtages, made Lord of all that pleaſant Creation, which they gazed on with a ſtareing maze. And that this opinion is more probable, appears, becauſe this Sin was the far more bating, ſeing it appeared with all the charmes, wherewith either pride, vanity or avarice could busk it; and explicats better to us the occaſion of all that enmity with which that Serpent hath always ſince purſued ſilly man: But, whither God will ſave juſt as many believers as there fell of the Angels, none can determine; neither can it be rationally deduced from that Scripture, *Scaturit terminus gentium, juxta numerum Angelorum Dei.* But, if it pleaſe God ſo to order it, it will doubtleſs aggrage their puniſhment by rackling their diſdain.

And ſeing the Angels have never obtained a remiſſion for this crime,

it is probable, that the correspondent of their sin is, in us, the sin against the holy Ghost.

For, if their *lapse* had been pardonable, some one or other of them had in all probability escap'd: but, if this was not that unpardonable sin, I scarce see where it shall be found. For, to say that it is a hating of God, as *God*, is to make it unpracticable rather then unpardonable: For, all creatures appete naturally what is good, and God, as *God*, is good; So that it is impossible that He can be hated under that reduplication.

The sin of Angels

The sin against the holy Ghost

It may be likewise conjectured, that voluntar and deliberate sacrilege is the sin against the holy Ghost; because *Ananias* and *Saphira*, in with-holding from the Church, a part of the price for which they sold their lands, are, by *Peter*, said to have lied, not to man, but to the holy Ghost; and his wife is there said to have tempted the Spi-

rits but, seing both of them resolved to continue in the Church (a resolution inconsistent with the sin against the holy Ghost) And seing many sins are more heinous, I cannot interpret this lying to the holy Ghost to be any thing else, but a sin against light, in which most penitents have been involved; albeit, I confess, this was a gross escape, seing it rob'd God of His *omniscience*, and supposed that He was not privy to such humane actings as have not the Sun for a witness. I do then conclude, that the sin against the holy Ghost may rather be a resolute undervaluing of God, and a scorning to receive a pardon from Him: and this is that which makes the Angels fall irrecoverable, and like the flaming sword, defends them from their re-entry into that Paradise from which they exile. And albeit to say, that the Angels rebellion flows from God's denying them repentance, may suit abundantly well with His unsearchable justice; yet,

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it is hard to reconcile it with his mercy. And this makes my private judgment place the unpardonableness of this sin, not in God's Decree, but in their obduration and rebellious impenitency: And the reason why these who commit this sin are never pardoned, is, because a pardon is never sought. That place of Scripture, wherein *Esau* is said to have sought the blessing with tears and not to have found it, astonishes me: Yet, I believe, that if his tears had streamed from a sense of his guilt more then of his punishment, doubtless he had not weept in vain; and in that he feared, he was no more to be pitied, far less pardoned, then a Malefactor, who, upon the scaffold, grants some few tears to the importunity of his torturer, but scornes to acknowledge the guilt of his crime: *for, pain, by contracting our bodies, strains out that liquid water, which thereafter globs it self in tears*: there could come no holy water from the pagan

sent of *Esau's* eyes; and if his remorse could have pierc'd his own heart, it had easily pierc'd heaven. Whilst others admire, I bless God, that He hath closed up the knowledge of that unpardonable sin under his own privy Seal: for, seing Sathan tempts me to sin with the hopes of an after-pardon, this bait is pull'd off his hook, by the fear I stand under, that the sin to which I am tempted, is that sin which can expect no pardon. And albeit it be customary amongst men, to beacon and set a mark upon such shelves and rocks as destroy passengers; yet, that is only done where commerce is allowed and sailing necessar: But, seing all sin is forbidden, God was not obliged to guard us with the knowledge of that sin, no further then by prohibiting us not to sin, but to stand in awe.

That first sin whereby our first Parents forfeited their primitive excellencies, was so pitifull a frailty, that I think we should rather lament, then enquire after it. To think that an aple had in it the seeds of all knowledge, or that it could assimulate him to his Creator, and could, in an instant, sublimate his nature, was a frailty to be admired in one of his piety and knowledge. Yet, I admire not that the breach of so mean a Precept was punish'd with such appearing rigor, because, the easier the command was, the contempt was proportionally the greater; and the first crimes are by Legislators punished, not only for guilt, but for example: But, I rather admire what could perswade the facile world to believe, that *Adam* was created, not only innocent, but even stored with all humane knowledge: For, besides *Man's fall.*

that, we have no warrand from Scripture for this alleadgiance, this his easie escape speaketh far otherwayes.

And albeit the Scripture tells us, that man was created perfect; yet, that inferres not that man was furnished with all humane knowledge: For, his perfection consisted in his adoring of, and depending upon, God, wherein we see these are exactest, whose judgements are least pestered with terrestrial knowledge, and least diverted with unnecessar speculations. And thus it appears, that these Sciences, after which his posterity pants, were not intended as noble *appanages* of the rational soul, but are rather toyish babies busk't up by fall'n man, whereby he diverts himself from reflecting too narrowly upon his native frailty. And thus Scripture tells us, *that God made man perfect, but that He sought out to Himself many inventions*, where perfection and invention seem to be stated

ſtated as enemies; and it is palpable, that theſe Sciences, which are by us lawrel'd and rewarded, are ſuch, as were inconſiſtent with that ſtate of innocency, ſuch as Law, Theology and Phyſick. And as for the reſt, it is abſurd to think, that *Adams* happineſs did conſiſt in the knowledge of theſe things which we our ſelves account either impertinent or ſuperfluous. But, that which convinces me moſt of this, is, that we forfeited nothing by *Adam's* fall which Chriſt's death reſtores not to us; wherefore, ſeing Chriſt by his own, or his Apoſtles promiſes, hath not aſſured us of any ſub-lunary or ſchool knowledge; nor hath our experience taught us, that Sciences are entailed upon the Saints, I almoſt believe, that *Adam* neither poſſeſt theſe before, nor yet loſt them by his fall. Neither think I St. *Paul* the more imperfect, that he deſired to know nothing but Chriſt and Him crucified: So that the difference betwixt *Adam* and his

his ſucceſſors, ſtood more in the ſtraightneſs of his affections, then in the depth of his knowledge. For, albeit it be believed, that the names whereby he baptiſed the creature, were full hiſtories of their natures written in ſhort hand; yet, this is but a conjecture authorized by no holy Text. It is a more civil error in the jewiſh Talmudiſts, to think that all the creatures were brought to *Adam*, to let him ſee that there were none amongſt them fit to be his companion, nor none ſo beautifull as *Eve*, then it is in their Cabaliſts to obſerve, that the hebrew word, ſignifying *man*, doth, by a tranſpoſition of letters, ſignifie likewayes, *benediction*, and the word ſignifying *woman*, makes up *malediction*. If we ſhould take a character of *Adam*'s knowledge from the Scriptures, we ſhall find more imprudence charged upon him then upon any of his ſucceſſors: For, albeit the ſilly woman was not deceived without the help of ſubtilty,

tilty; yet, *Adam* sinned upon a bare suggestion, and thereafter was so simple, as to hide himself when God called him to an account, as if a thicket of trees could have sconced him from his all-seeing Maker; and when he was accused, was so simple, as to think his wives commands sufficient to exoner him, and so absurd, as to make God Himself sharer with him in his guilt, *the woman whom thou gavest me*, &c.

There is more charm in acquireing new knowledge, then in reflecting upon what we have already gain'd, (as if the *species* of known objects did corrupt, by being treasur'd up in our brains) And this induces me to believe, that our scantness of native knowledge, is rather a happiness then a punishment; the Citizens of *London* or *Paris* are not so tickled by the sight of these stately Cities, as strangers who were not born within their walls, and I may say to such, as by

spelling

ſpelling the Starres deſire to read the fortunes of others, as our Saviour ſaid to *Peter*, when he was deſirous to know the horoſcope of the beloved Apoſtle, *what is that to thee?* What can it advantage us to know the correſpondence kept amongſt the Planets, and to underſtand the whole anatomy of natures *skeleton*; in gazing upon whoſe parts, we are oft times as ridiculous as children, who love to leaf over taliduce Pictures; for in both variety is all the uſury that can be expected, as the return of our time and pains; and if we pry inly into this ſmall maſs of our preſent knowledge, we ſhall find, that our knowledge is one of the fertileſt fountains of our miſery: For, do not ſuch as know that they are ſick, groan more heavily then a countrey Clown, who apprehends nothing till extremity creat in him ſome ſenſe? And doubtleſs the reaſon why children and idiots endure more, and drunken men eſcape no dangers

dangers then others, is, because albeit they cannot provide such apt remedies, yet, they are less acquainted with what they feel then we are. Are not these who understand that they are affronted, more vex'd then such as are ignorant of these misfortunes? and these who foresee the changes and revolutions, which are to befall either their friends or their countries, are thereby more sadly diseased, then he who sees no further then his nose? Our Saviour wept when He did foresee, that one stone of *Jerusalem* should not be left upon another; and when *Hazael* askt *Elisha* why he wept, he told him, it was because he did foresee what mischief *Hazael* was to do in *Israel*. Let us not then complain of the loss of *Adam*'s knowledge, but of his innocency; we know enough to save us, and what is more then that, is superfluous.

Adam cannot be thought to have been the first sinner, for *Eve* sinned before

before him; So that albeit it seem a paradox, yet it is most probable, that albeit *Adam* had for ever abstained from eating the *forbidden fruit*, his posterity had been still as miserable as now they are; seing the guilt of either of the Parents had been sufficient to stain the innocency of the children. For, as the Scripture tells us, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And *David*, in that Text, which of all others speaks most expresly of original sin, layes the guilt upon her and confesseth only, that his mother had conceived him in sin.

As *Adam* was not the first sinner, So the eating of the aple may be justly thought not to be the first sin; *Eve* having, before his eating the aple, repeated most falsely the Command: For, whereas God did assure them, *that in that day they did eat the fruit, they should surely die*, *Eve* relates it thus, *Ye shall not eat the fruit, least ye die*, representing only that as contingent which

was

was most certain: and whereas God had only said, *ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree*, *Eve* sayes, *God said, ye shall not touch it*; which it may be furnish'd the serpent this argument to cheat her, ye see God hath deceived you, for the fruit may be touched without danger, why may it not then be eaten without hazard? and it is probable, that he hath failed in the one as well as in the other. But to abstract from this, it cannot be said, that the eating of the *forbidden fruit* was the first sin; for, before *Adam* did eat thereof, he behoved both to believe the Serpent and mis-believe his Maker, and thus *mis-belief* was the first sin: For, after he had credited the Serpents report, he was no longer innocent, and so he did not eat the aple till after his fall. What wiser are these Divines, who debate, whither *Adam's* falling-sickness and sin had become heriditarie, if our predecessors had come out of his loins before he sin'd, then these who combated

hated for the largest share of the King of *Spains* gold; if it had been to be devided?

In the Almighties procedure against poor *Adam* for this crime, His infinite mercy appears to admiration; and God foreseeing, that man might sharpen the ax of justice too much upon the whet-stone of private revenge, seems to have, in this process, formed to him, an exact model of inquisition. For, He arraigns and cites *Adam*, Adam, *where art thou?* He shews him his dittay, *Hast thou eat of the fruit whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* He allows him exculpation, *Who told thee?* and in order thereto, did examine the woman, upon whom *Adam* did transfer the guilt. And albeit nothing could escape His omniscience, and that He did see *Adam* eat the apple, yet, to teach Judges that they should walk according to what is proven, and not according to what they are themselves conscious to, He did not

condemn

condemn him till first he should have a confession from his own mouth. And thus, *Gen.* 18. 21. the Lord sayes, *Because the cry of Sodom is great—I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it*, &c. And in the last place, albeit the fatal decree did bear, *in that day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, yet, were his dayes prolonged a hundred and thirty years after the sin was committed.

It is too curious a disquisition to enquire how God can be said to be mercifull, mercy being the mitigation of justice, of which His pure nature cannot be capable, seing whatever He wills is just: And so He cannot be thought in any thing which He wills to recede from justice, and so can no more properly be said to be mercifull, then one Act can be both the Law and the mitigation of the Law. But I will press no point of this nature, knowing that humble modesty is the best Theology.

The

The stile of Genesis.

The *vatican* of paganism can not, for the male-ness of it's stile, match that matchless Book of *Genesis*, whereof each sentence seems a quarry of rich meditations, and each word a spell, sufficient to conjure the devil of *Delphos*. Might not that excellent expression, *Let us make man after our image*, convince any of the being of a Trinity, who deny plurality of Gods. It is wonderfull, that the Saturn-humour'd Jew can, in this Passage, mis-take his own Saviour; and it is strange that he should not, from the triangular architecture of his own heart, conclude the Trinity of the God-head, whose temple it was appointed to be. Albeit I be an admirer of this nurse of Cabalism; yet, I approve not the conceit of these doting Rabbies, who teach, that God from His own mouth, dited both the words and mater of the *Pentateuch*; whereas, He furnish'd only to the other Prophets the mater and sub-

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ject unphraſed: for, not only did God promiſe, that He ſhould put His words in their mouths, but likewayes, they preface thus their own propheſies, In the dayes of ſuch a King, the Word of the Lord came to ſuch a Prophet, ſaying, &c. Neither is this conceit conſiſtent with that high eſteem, which they, (even in this) intend for their patron, *Moſes*; ſeing it allows him leſs truſt from his divine Maſter, then the other Pen-men of Scripture had repoſed in them.

That brain hath too little *pia materia*, that is too curious to know why God, who evidences ſo great a deſire to ſave poor man, and is ſo powerfull, as that his ſalvation needed never have run the hazard, if His infinit wiſdom had ſo decree'd, did yet ſuffer him to fall: For, if we enter once the liſts of that debate, our reaſon is too weak to bear the burden of ſo great a difficulty. And albeit it may be anſwered, that God might have reſtrained man, but that reſtraint *Why man fell.*

straint did not stand with the freedom of mans will which God had bestowed upon him; yet, this answer stops not the mouth of the difficulty. For certainly, if one should detain a mad man from running over a precipice, he could not be thereby said to have wronged his liberty: and seing man is by many Divines allowed a freedom of will, albeit he must of necessity do what is evil, and that his freedom is salv'd by a liberty to choose only one of moe evils, it would appear strange why his liberty might not have consisted well enough with a moral impossibility of sinning, and might not have been abundantly conserved in his freedom to choose one of moe goods: yet, these reasonings are the calling God to an account, and so impious. For, if God had first created man, surrounded with our present infirmities, could we have complained? Why then should we now complain, seing we are but faln to a better estate then we deserved;

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ſeing we ſtumbled not for want of light, but becauſe we extinguiſh'd our own light, and ſeing our Saviours dying for us may yet re-inſtate us in a happier eſtate then that from which we are now faln.

Albeit the glaſs of my years hath not yet turn'd five and twenty, yet the curioſity I have to know the different *limbo's* of departed ſouls and to view the card of the region of death, would give me abundance of courage to encounter this king of terrors, though I were a pagan: But, when I conſider what joyes are prepared for them who fear the Almighty, and what crazineſs attends ſuch as ſleep in *Methuſelams* cradle, I pity them who make *long-life* one of the oftneſt repeated petitions of their *Pater noſter*; and yet theſe ſure are the more advanc'd in folly, who deſire to have their names enſhrin'd after death in the airy monument of *fame*: Whereas it is one of the promiſes made to the Elect, *that they ſhall reſt from their la-*

hours, and their works ſhall follow them. Moſt mens mouths are ſo foul, that it is a puniſhment to be much in them: for my own part, I deſire the ſame good offices from my good name that I do from my cloaths, which is to skreen me from the violence of exteriour accidents.

As theſe Criminals might be judg'd diſtracted, who being condemned to die, would ſpend their ſhort reprival in diſputing about the ſituation and fabrick of their gibbets; So may I juſtly think theſe *literati* mad, who ſpend the ſhort time allotted them for repentance, in debating about the ſeat of hell, and the torments of tortur'd ſpirits. To ſatisfie my curioſitie, I was once reſolv'd, with the Platonick, to take the promiſe of ſome dying friend, that he ſhould return and ſatisfie me in all my private doubts concerning hell and heaven; yet I was juſtly afraid, that he might have return'd me the ſame anſwer which *Abraham* return'd to *Dives*, *have*

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they not Moſes *and the Prophets? if they hear not them, wherefore will they be perſwaded though one ſhould riſe from the dead?*

The *Millenar's* ephimerides, which aſſures us, that Chriſt ſhall reign a thouſand years with the Saints on earth, is as ſenſual an opinion as that of the *Turks*, who make heaven a bordell, wherein we ſhall ſatisfie our venerious appetites; for the one ſhews the vain glory and vindictive humour of the Saints, as palpably as the other ſhews the luſt of the Mahumetans. If Chriſts reigning ſom any years be for convincing the world that he is the real *Meſſiah*, their hereſie ſhould have ante-dated his coming; and his reign ſhould rather have begun long ſince, when many ages were to be converted, or at leaſt it ſhould not have been thruſt out upon the ſelvage and border of time, when very few ſhall remain to be convinc'd: and if in this they intend a diſplaying of Chriſts glory, certain- *The Millenaries refuted,*

ly they are mistaken; for what honour can it be for a King, to have his foot-stool made his Throne? So that I think, these poor Phanaticks have taken the patronage of this error rather by necessity then choice, all other opinions and conceits being formerly pre-ingaged to other Authors.

The Authors censure of this Essay, and an account of his design.

As I am not able, by the *Jacobs-ladder* of my merits, to scale heaven, So am I less able, by the *Jacobs-staffe* of my private ability, to take up the true altitude of its mysteries. I have travell'd no further in Theology then a *Sabbath-dayes* journey; and therefore, it were arrogance in me to offer a map of it to the credulous world: But, if I were worthy to be consulted in these spiritual securities, I should advise every private Christian, rather to stay still in the barge of the Church with the other Disciples, then by an ill bridled zeal, to hazard drowning alone with *Peter*, by offering to walk upon the unstable

unstable surface of his own fleeting and water-weak fancies, though with a pious resolution to meet our Saviour. For, albeit one may be a real Christian, and yet differ from the Church, which sayes, that the wise men who come to bow before our Saviours cradle-throne, were three Kings, and in such other opinions as these, wherein the fundamentals of faith and quiet of the Church are no wayes concerned; yet certainly, he were no wise man himself, nor yet found Christian, who would not even in these bow the flag of his private opinion to the commands of the Church. The Church is our mother, and therefore we should wed no opinion without her consent who is our parent; or if we have rashly wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and her Officials to grant us a divorce. As for my self, my vanity never prompted me to be standard-bearer to any, either new Sect, or old Heresie; and I pity such as love to live like Pew-

keepers

keepers in the house of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a room for themselves. If there be any thing in this Discourse which may offend such as are really pious, it shall much grieve me, who above all men honours them most. What I have spoken against cases of Conscience and the like, strikes not against their Christian fellowship and correspondence, but against the apish fopperies of prentending counterfeits. It shall alwayes be my endeavour for the future, rather to drop tears for my own sins and the sins of others, then yrk for their conversion: our prayers help such as never heard them, whereas these only who read our discourses are better'd by them. *Abrahams* prayers prevailed more with God (even for *Sodom*) then *Lot*'s re-iterated Sermons; and no wonder that the success be unequal, seing in the one we have to do with a mercifull God, whereas in the other we must perswade a hard-hearted people.

I

I intend not to purchaſe from poſterity the title of *Reformer*, ſeing moſt of theſe have faln under the ſame guilt; and have had the ſame fate, with that curious Painter, who having drawn an excellent *face*, as happily as could have been expected from the ſmootheſt mirrour, did thereafter daſh it afreſh upon the ſuggeſtion of each intrant, till at laſt he reformed it from being any way like to the Original.

Divinity differs in this from all other Sciences, that theſe being invented by mortals, receive growth from time and experience; whereas, it being penn'd by the omniſcient Spirit of God, can receive no addition without receiving prejudice. It is moſt remarkable, that our Saviours Prayers, His Sermons and the *Creed*, delivered to us by His Apoſtles, were roomed up in farr narrower bounds then theſe of our times, which an hidropſie of ill concocted opinions hath ſwell'd beyond their true dimenſions: many whereof

of have either been brooded by *vanity* or *interest*; or else ignorant and violent defendents being brought to a bay, by such as impugn'd their resolv'd-upon principles, have been forc'd to assert these by-blow and preter-intentional *tenets*; and having once floored them, have thereafter judg'd themselves concerned to defend them, in point of Scholastick honour. Some well-meaning Christians likewayes, do sometimes, for maintenance of what is lawfull and pious, think, that they may lawfully advance opinions, which otherwayes they would never have allowed of; and as in nature we see, that the collision of two hard bodies makes them rebound so much the further from one another, So opposition makes both parties fly into extremeties. Thus I believe, that the debates betwixt *Roman-catholicks* and *Protestants*, concerning the Virgin *Mary*, have occasion'd, in some amongst both, expressions, if not heretical, yet at least undecent. Thus a great

great many *Confessions of Faith* become, like *Noahs* Ark, a receptacle of clean and unclean: and which is also deplorable, they do, like ordinar dyals, serve only for use in that one meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty miles ye make them heterodox. I speak not this to the disparagement of our own Church, (which I reverence in all it's Precepts and Practices) but to beget a blushing conviction in such as have diverted from it; and whose conventicles, compared with our *Jerusalem*, resemble only the removed huts of these who live a part, because they are sick of the plague.

I am not at a maze, to see men so tenacious of contrary principles in Religion; for, man's thoughts being vast and various, he snatches at every offered suggestion, and if by accident he entertain any of these many, as a divine immission, he thereafter thinks it were blasphemy to bring that thought to the test of *reason*, because he hears that *faith*

is

is above *reason*, or to relinquish it, because the common suffrage of his Country runs it counter, seing he is taught even by them, that the principles of *belief* must not be chosen by the Pole.

And seing *faith* is above *reason*, (albeit, as I said formerly, it would seem otherwise) I wonder not to see even the best temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own religion to be therefore ridiculous.

My design all alongst this Discourse, butts at this one principle, *that Speculations in Religion are not so necessary, and are more dangerous then sincere Practice.* It is in Religion as in Herauldry, the simpler the bearing be, it is so much the purer and the ancienter. I will not say that our School-distinctions are the impressions of the devils cloven foot; but I may say, that our piety and principles scarce ever grow after they begin to fork in such dichotomies; which, like *Jacob*

and

and *Esau*, divide and jar as soon as they are born: and betwixt whom, the poor propositon, out of which both did spring, is like a malefactor, most lamentably drag'd to pieces. I have endeavoured to demonstrat, that dogmaticalness and paralitick scepticisme, are but the *Apocrypha* of true Religion; and I believe the one begets the other, as a toad begets a cockatrice: For the Sceptick perceiving, that the magisterial dogmatist erres (as these must erre somewhere who assert too much) even in these things whereof he affirms, he is as sure, as of any principle in Religion, (which is their ordinary stile) he finding out their error in one of their principles, is thereby emboldned to contravert all. This being the scope of this Essay, I wish that these who read it would expound it as Divines do parables, *Quæ non sunt argumentativa ultra suum scopum.*

I doubt not but some will think me no less absurd in writing against vanity, *His Apology.*

nity, whilst I am so vain my self as to write Books, then the Philosophers were judged of old, for denying motion whilst their tongues mov'd in their cheek; but, to these my answer shall be, that finding many grovelling in their errors, I have, in this Essay, proffer'd them my assistance, not to shew my *strength* but my *compassion*. The multitude (which albeit it hath ever been allowed many heads, yet was never allowed any brains) will doubtless accuse my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations so excentrick to my employment; to these my return is, that these papers are but the pairings of my other Studies, and because they were but pairings, I have flung them out into the streets. I wrote them in my retirements when I wanted both books and employment, and I resolve that this shall be the last inroad I shall ever make into forreign contemplations. There are some thoughts in this Peece which may seem to rebell against the empire of the Schools; yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the publick Clock of the City, especially where the sun of Righteousness hath not, by pointing clearly

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the dyal of Faith, ſhewed which of the two are in the error. There are ſome expreſſions in it, which cenſure may force to ſpeak otherwayes then they have in commiſſion; yet none of them got room in this Diſcourſe, untill they firſt gave an account of their deſign to a moſt pious and learned Divine: and ſo, it may be the lines are of themſelves ſtreight, albeit they lye not parallel with each cenſurers crooked rule. As this Diſcourſe intends, for the Divines of our Church, all reſpect; So all that is in it, is moſt freely ſubmitted to their cenſure.

The Author intended this Diſcourſe only as an introduction to the Stoicks morals, *but probably, he will, for many years, ſtop here.*

ERRATA.

Blurres in the Copy and the Authors abſence occaſioned theſe *errata's*, which muſt be helped before reading, ſeing they deſtroy both the ſenſe and ſoundneſs of the Diſcourſe.

IN the Preface, p. 2. l. 4. for *Prophet*, read *Jobnadab*: p. 9. f. *Taps* r. *Tops*. p. 15. l. 7. add *ſome* before *Epiſcopiſts* and *Presbyterians*. p. 16. l. 4. f. *all* r. *almoſt all*.

In the Book, p. 24. l. 16. f. *hath no*, r. *ſeems to have no*. p. 25. l. 18. f. *is but a conceit*, r. *ſeems but a conceit*. p. 35. l. 13. f. *continual* r. *extraordinar*. p. 58. l. 19. f. *triumphant*, r. *militant*. p. 63. l. 22. f. *every*, r. *few have*. p. 73. l. 10. f. *excremenſilius*, r. *excrementitius*. p. 74. l. 17. f. *an allegory*, &c. r. *that there run many bid allegories from* Geneſis *to* Johns Revelations, *wherein the myſtical ſenſe deſerves likewayes the name of Gods Word*. p. 85. l. 8. add, *yet this is but a ſophiſme; for, ſeing our bodies are the temples of the holy Ghoſt, we can no more beſtow them upon ſuch uſes, then a Church-warden can give the uſe of the Church to Tavernere*. p. 85. l. 23. f. *thundered from mount* Sinai, r. *delivered in almoſt one context with that Law which was thundred from mount* Sinai. p. 122. l. 22. f. *an unbyaſſed enquiry it will appear*, r. *upon an ſuperficial enquiry it would appear*. *By the Laws of his Country*, p. 57. and elſewhere, the Author means, *that Religion which is ſetled by Law*.

In other expreſſions, the Author recommends himſelf to the gloſs of the readers charity.

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